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TOPSPIN/Introductions 6

FLASH

Mick Jones, Alison Moyet, Tex and the Horseheads, Sting, Lady Pank, R&B Cadets, Jonathan Borofsky, Fat Boys & Weather Girls, Nicollette Sheridan. 8

TEENAGE SEX

Wally George, infamous host of "Hot Seat," doesn't think there should be any. 17

EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN

Imagine a construction site set to music. 18

REBORN ON THE BAYOU

John Fogerty, once and future King of doing it his own way. 20

A WILD BOY ALONE

Nick Rhodes of Duran Duran plays with some other boys in Paris. 24

HOMECOMING QUEEN WITH A BULLET

Everybody run—Julie Brown opens up. . . . 27

SPINS/Records 28

UNDERGROUND 34

SINGLES 36

SOUNDS LIKE THE TALKING HEADS

The Heads celebrate their 10th anniversary with a new, spectacular album, and a candid interview. 38

CALYPSO

Trinidad's gift to the world of music fuels its 150-year-old carnival, giving new meaning to the word "party." 42

HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLVES

Los Lobos offer an enchilada of Tex-Mex, rockabilly, R&B and country. Hot stuff for jaded musical palates. 46

NEW SOUNDS/Vangelis 49

BILLY JOEL TALKS BACK/Interview 50

MOVING IMAGES

Cisco and Egbert review music videos; *Stranger than Paradise*, an off-beat film. 55

UNDERGROUND RECORD STORES

They sell imports, local music, hardcore, or just plain hard-to-find singles, albums and EPs. 58

UB40: STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

A gang of kids from Birmingham, England, create a beat of the street by fusing reggae with pop. 60

STATE OF THE ART/Equipment 63

KISS ME BEFORE YOU GO GO

The beat, the pulse, the momentum of Chocolate City. 65

THE SMITHS

An intriguing new group from England. 68

AMERICA'S COUPLE

John McEnroe and Tatum O'Neal: A match made in Hollywood. 71

SPIN PATROL

We keep an ever-vigilant watch on the press. 73

THANK HEAVEN FOR 7-11

Henry Rollins, lead singer of Black Flag, honors an American institution. 74

This One



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TOP SPIN

Who's Who, What's What, and Why

In the first two weeks that the first issue of SPIN was on sale, it virtually sold out. In some cities, there wasn't a single copy available after 14 days. This is incredible for a new magazine. At presstime, we were thinking of running radio ads explaining why people looking for SPIN probably couldn't find it, and asking them (you) to be patient and wait for this, the second issue. It is a gloriously absurd position to be in.

That we printed 12 copies notwithstanding (seriously, we distributed 350,000), SPIN has been received as the breath of fresh air it promised to be. There is no mystery to that. We simply approach music with all the love we have for it. All along, I said SPIN would share the excitement of discovery with our readers. And that's exactly what we do.

For this issue, we sent Glenn O'Brien as far away as we possibly could on short notice—Trinidad—but he came back. Good thing, too. As deadlines closed in like ominous, black clouds, it seemed sure that we'd have to run Part 344 of *War and Peace* after all, when Glenn, apparently bored with trying to keep up his tan by catching the late winter sun reflected from the building opposite, mumbled something about having written an article about the Calypso Carnival.

"It's been cut to a Yakety Yak," growled Ed Rasen, picking bits of vinyl from his teeth.

"A 5000-word Yakety Yak!" sputtered the depthlessly talented and, admittedly, tanned Mr. O'Brien.

"Well, I might still have the original somewhere..." Mr. Rasen trailed off, disinterested.

I interceded. Deliberately, I handed Ed a copy of Mick Jagger's *She's the Boss* to distract him while I asked where he had put Glenn's article. Eyes aflame in that rabid expression of understanding and instinct, Ed ripped the cellophane and cardboard cover off in the same sweep of his massive hand, snapped the puny disc in his twitching palm and chomped on the first jagged half, informing us between crunches that the piece was on his desk. I hate it when Ed talks while he's reviewing records.

Publishing works like this: part vision, part unflagging effort, part magical chemistry of talents, and part—about 92 percent—luck.

Last month, Howard Rosenberg wrote what must surely be the definitive piece on Wally George, arguably TV's most outspoken talk-show host, certainly one of its most entertaining, and without question its most fanatically right-wing. (Go past Reagan, John Wayne is a motel

on George's endless highway to the right; Joe McCarthy is about halfway). Well, Wally read that piece and asked if he could write for us. The result is his interesting views on teenage sex (page 17).

Amazingly, this summer marks the 10th anniversary of the Talking Heads. I say amazing because the group seems so perpetually new, ageless. Glenn O'Brien and Scott Cohen interviewed them in New York between recording sessions for their new album, which we will review next issue.

Bart Bull, an extraordinary writer from somewhere in Arizona, wrote "Reborn on the Bayou" (page 20), an analytical look at John Fogerty, unseparated by either legend or current hype and so, for that, precise, measured, illuminating, riveting. Read it.

In rock 'n' roll it's rare to get a scoop. This is because a million press agents have a single, dedicated purpose: rid the world of any music secret. A band would have to go to extraordinary lengths to conceal something from the well-intentioned publicists. Such lengths are not humanly possible—ergo, no secrets, no scoops.

You may not have heard that Nick Rhodes and Simon Le Bon, two-fifths of Duran Duran (some say four-tenths, but that's academic) went to Paris to record an album with some excellent session musicians, including Andy McKay, late of Roxy Music. At the time we were granted the interview, we were the only press to know this. It was an exclusive. The interview was conducted about 4:00 local time. Had we been able to publish at 4:01 on the same day, we could have genuinely claimed a scoop. As it is, whether you have heard about their yet-untitled project or not, Chrissie Iley's article is interesting.

Henry Rollins, of Black Flag, is in love. This is nearly a scoop, but only qualifies by cheating, because, of course, that is a play on words. He's in love with 7-11—hardly fodder for gossip columns, but around here, that's feature material.

Trivia: There are parts of the magazine Glenn O'Brien didn't write. For instance, page 67 was kept a secret from him. But he did produce most of this issue. At the end, I saw him on his knees, gently weeping as he wrote record reviews along the wall trim in the corridor. Ed was standing over him, a hand on his shoulder, saying softly, "Let's go buddy, it's over, you know it had to close eventually."

It was a very touching moment. I realized how close we'd all become. SPIN was happening.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.



George Dubose



© Biff Productions, 1985



Mark Wenling



Ed Colver

Top: Talking Heads Jerry Harrison, David Byrne, Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz show us their hands. **Center:** Biff shows us ourselves, this time, and lots of other slightly warped people other times. **Above left:** Scott Cohen shows us his cassette recorder. **And, above right:** Henry Rollins, better known as the lead singer of Black Flag, but, from this issue on, always a welcome contributor! See the last page for what he thinks of 7-11.

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Mick Jones;
Sting; Alison Moyet;
a brown girl in a
white bikini; R&B Cadets;
Fat Boys and Weather Girls;
Pirates and Princes

FLASH

Edited by Jessica Berens



Josh Cherise

The Triumphant Return of Mick Jones

A terse communiqué was issued in August, 1983, by the office of The Clash: Mick Jones had been dismissed from the group. Apparently, he was ideologically unsound.

Jones had appeared one afternoon at the group's West London rehearsal studio, only to be informed by vocalist Joe Strummer that he no longer wanted his songwriting partner and guitarist in the group. Jones replaced his guitar in its case and left the studio. "The moment I closed the case, my seven years with The Clash were over and my life began again," he says. The action marked the culmination of months of simmering tension between Jones and Strummer. Ironically, it was Jones, the founder of The Clash, who had brought Strummer into the group in the first place.

Strummer specifically accused Jones of behaving like a flashy, self-indulgent rock star, and by so doing, had become everything The Clash were against.

"I know that I did behave like a rock star," Jones now admits. "But in doing that, I was just one component of what made up The Clash. It was never just one person, or one attitude: You could see it all onstage, the way we moved around and complemented each other. At first, the effect we had live was all we were after. The three of us at the front knew exactly how it looked to the audience, it was exactly as we wanted—that's why we

weren't even bothered how it sounded at first.

"I did behave like a prima donna, I did pull numbers. But that was the attitude we all learned from Bernie Rhodes, our manager.

"But, anyway, I've grown up now," he adds, acknowledging the part played in clearing the pollutants from his soul by the birth 10 months ago of his daughter, Lauren, to his girlfriend, Daisy. Though his version of the split differs in almost every detail from that given by Strummer, Jones believes there is no profit in delivering diatribes about his former companions. "The Japanese believe that if you say bad things about other people, then what you say is a judgment on yourself, rather than of the people you are talking about. That's why I don't want to make any character judgments of Joe or Paul (Simonon)—I believe other people will perceive the truth from what they have said about me."

On a Sunday evening, Mick Jones is in the Townhouse studio in West London mixing "The Bottom Line," his first single since he left The Clash, the proclamatory statement of intent for his new and as-yet-unnamed four-piece group, and the trailer for an eventual album. The song was tentatively set for a May release on Columbia—by coincidence, the same month that his former cohorts were scheduled to release their new album, their seventh as The Clash, and

the first without Jones. When asked to comment on what The Clash were up to these days, their manager, Kosmo Vinyl, illuminated: "There's enough confusion surrounding The Clash without my adding to it." Thanks, Kosmo. Your complimentary copy is on the way.

"The Bottom Line" is stirring and anthem-like, loaded with references to other musical forms, but with Jones's unerring sense of melody as its lifeblood. Like all the best things, it is very simple, belying the immense diligence that has gone into its making. A baseball cap jammed down over his tumbling, black-dyed mane, Jones approaches the task of mixing with the painstaking assiduousness of the painter he was trained as, applying minute brushstrokes of sound until the picture is complete.

"The purpose of this group is to say something positive for all time, something that separates us from those groups that rant on about world destruction, and those that are just palatable and bland. We want to say something positive, and not be browbeaten into toeing the line.

"On a more personal level, I see what I'm doing as a battle to come up with our new sound: We're sound pioneers. After all, it would be terrible to come up with just another Clash LP."

Jones's first steps of a long personal climb were taken as soon as he walked away

from Strummer and Simonon. First he enlisted Leo Williams, a dreadlocked black bass-player and former member of the Basement Five. But Jones's efforts to assist former Clash drummer Topper Headon by giving him a job in the new group were fruitless; for the time being, at least, Topper had found heroin.

By May of last year, after nine months of work, it was again just Jones and Leo Williams. Through an advertisement in *Melody Maker* a drummer was found: Gregg Roberts, a survivor of several soul and reggae bands.

But Jones was troubled by indefinable, niggling doubts that all was not yet complete. A stalwart ally during his months in the wilderness had been Don Letts, the Rastafarian filmmaker whose style of "visual dub" had dealt so empathetically with The Clash on all their videos. Letts's support of his friend intensified after he learned that his continuing association with Jones meant that he was considered persona non grata at Clash events. Jones then asked Letts to join this new group.

"After working with The Clash for seven years, I'd become unconsciously constricted by all the rules of musicianship that I'd learnt," says Jones. "So what Don does is to open all that up again, because he looks at

things and sees possibilities in a way that a musician wouldn't. He's incredibly creative, and not just in a visual way."

Letts plays percussion and provides keyboard effects. His training with film scripts, moreover, has resulted in the group's new songs having a visual quality that renders them perfect for future videos.

"What we are presenting," emphasizes Jones, pausing before swinging around on his chair to the mixing desk to add a further minuscule aural detail to "The Bottom Line," "is a widescreen, positive music, done in a totally high-tech way, but still using just guitar, bass and drums. I hope people can appreciate a gambler. I know what I was good at, and really, all I'm doing is just continuing to do it. So as far as my purpose in this group is concerned, it is just doing what I do best."

After months of angst-ridden internal battles, he is once again working with the full flow of his creativity unblocked. "I'm on top of the world," he says. His eyes that, for a while, were dead and pained, are gleaming again with their once-characteristic fiery energy. Then he grins, slyly ironic, "And it's about time."

—Chris Salewicz

Street credibility (below L to R)—Gregg Roberts, Don Letts, Leo Williams and Mick Jones.



No Blues Is Bad News For Alf



Robert Erdmann

"In the early days, if you were a black singer your music was called 'race music.' But it wasn't a racial thing that kept you back. For many years, being a blues person was looked down upon by blacks as well as whites. Even today, we have had to work even harder than people who are in rock and soul music." B.B. King said that, and after more than 30 years in the business, he should know. Even now, pure blues is still something of an esoteric musical art form enjoyed by the enthusiastic few. Nevertheless, the genre dubbed "the devil's music" by pious southern blacks in the '20s has survived, and will continue to thanks to singers like Alison Moyet, who is bringing the blues to the '80s. Her voice is richly expressive, refreshingly versatile, and owes a debt (which Moyet admits) to the tradition of Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday and Janis Joplin. Even the sternest critics have had to admit that she has an unusual gift.

Her first group, a duo called Yaz, linked her emotionally charged voice with the cool, synthesized wizardry of Depeche Mode's Vince Clark.

The duo had two excellent hit albums in the UK, and chart success in the States with "Situation." But it was an uneasy musical marriage, and the pair split. Moyet decided to push forward with Tony Swain and Steve Jolley, the production team behind Bananarama and Spandau Ballet.

"I like singing blues and jazz," says Moyet. "Commercially, that's a rather self-indulgent music. However, I prefer to be a pop singer than a non-working jazz/blues singer." Swain and Jolley have managed to give her new album, *Alf* (her name when she was a punk), a pop feel without drowning Alison's bluesy bent. "Invisible" is the single, but her favorite track is "Love Resurrection," a rather risqué ballad.

Moyet just had a UK hit with a cover version of Billie Holiday's "That Ole Devil Called Love." She hopes to come to the States this summer for some live performances, "depending on how the album does." If sales in Europe are anything to go by, we should be seeing her here very soon.

A reluctant star, and certainly no video goddess—

"I have a basic steady life and I'm not going to crack up."

—Alison Moyet

she is built like a 747—she relies on her talent and wit. Her strength, she says, is that "I have respect for other people; I would never treat one person better than another. And I don't get taken in. It could all end tomorrow. And I haven't thrown anything away. I have a basic, steady life, and I'm not going to crack up."

Yakety Yak

It's brazen self-confidence in a way that doesn't upset the people you like and annoys the fuck out of people you hate.

—Andrew Eldritch, of Sisters of Mercy, on stardom

A woman's place is on my face.

—Jim Fetus, when asked by the hostess of a television music show if he thought some of the lyrics to his new album *Hole* were derogatory to women.



Laurie Levine

Put an A.P.B. Out on Sting (But Don't Call the Police)

It's official: The Police have split up. In an interview with the *London Daily Mirror*, Stewart Copeland said: "The belief that we have taken a sabbatical is utter rubbish; we officially broke up at the end of our 1984 tour of America. I signed an agreement and there is definitely no decision to get back together. I always enjoyed playing with the Police, but it became a bit like too many hours at the movies. So we decided to leave the safety of our ivory closets. I will be very disappointed if I never get to play with Sting or Andy again. There is still a great deal of love between us that will never be extinguished, but now I have to think about my solo career and the challenges it presents. I have to make my own cup of tea in the mornings—pretty rough for a guy who is not that used to that sort of thing."

There will be one more Police album, promised to A&M, but this may just be the live record already expected for June release.

While all three members are actively pursuing new projects—Copeland is working on a film, *The Rhythmist*, and Andy Summers is writing a screenplay—it is Sting who is drawing, as usual, the most attention. He began assembling a new band in February, eventually enlisting bassist Darryl Jones (from Miles Davis's group), Kenny Kirkland on keyboards, brilliant sax man Branford Marsalis, and demon drummer Omar Hakim (formerly of Weather Report).

As a sort of warm-up, Sting played three nights at the Ritz in New York with this back-up band, and then flew to Barbados, ahead of the group, to finish writing songs

for an album. (After considering several top producers, including Quincy Jones, he decided to produce himself.)

Isolated in Eddie Grant's Blue Wave studio on a backstreet in St. Phillip, the group began to fuse. Kirkland is a somewhat menacing, professorial, classically-trained keyboardist. Branford Marsalis, an intense horn player with an encyclopedic sense of rhythm and brilliant improvisational playing is the laid-back older brother of trumpet sensation Wynton Marsalis. (The brothers had a falling-out: Wynton, a fanatical "purist," accused Branford of "selling out" by working on a pop album. Branford replied: "I've got things I want to try. I think this guy (Sting) is important. I want to play with this dude.") Darryl Jones paid his dues with Miles Davis, which is jazz life in the combat zone. Omar Hakim reportedly blew away Sting with his stick work.

Fascinated by their virtuosity and how well they complemented him, Sting gave them room to play with his ideas, bend them, and refashion them. The sessions, despite the limited amount of time the musicians had spent together, became magically synchronistic. Sting often listened, mesmerized, as one of the others would take an idea, and extend and expand it into new, exciting sounds. In those moments, Sting heard the sounds he had only previously imagined come to life; then, he would smile and break into his easy laugh. It was happening.

The gem of the album may be "Set Them Free." Described as "incredible" by the few who've already heard it, it has

a hint of the haunting, lilting "Every Breath You Take," a dramatic mating of rock and soul.

Titles of the other songs reveal a more philosophical and reflective side of Sting: "The Children's Crusade," "Hope the Russians Love Their Children," and "Moon over Bourbon Street." The latter is a rock-opera ballad based on Ann Rice's new wave gothic novel, *Interview with the Vampire*.

The album, untitled as yet, though scheduled to be released in June, is expected to launch a whirlwind of activity for Sting. After completing production on the island and a brief stay in New York, Sting will fly to Paris for a week of live performances and the filming of a movie based on the forming of the band and featuring their new songs.

The film is described as a cross between *Stop Making Sense* and *The Last Waltz*, attempting to capture the intense creative camaraderie of the project.

Sting has synchronized the release of the album, and the single, the making of the film and the start of the tour with a new band, with the release of his first major Hollywood starring role. He plays a hip Dr. Frankenstein in Universal's *The Bride*. (Jennifer Beals of *Flashdance* plays the femme fatale title role.)

—Rudy Langlais

R&B Cadets

The R&B Cadets started five years ago with no intention of earning a living. After playing innumerable bars, clubs and fests in the corn belt, they are still the best-kept Midwestern secret since Louis Jordan left Milwaukee. There's Paul Cebal and John Sieger on guitars, Mike Sieger on bass, Bob Jennings on keyboards and saxophone, Bob Schneider on drums, and Robyn Pluer, the "token" lady, on accordion, glockenspiel and keyboards. They play a mixture of John Sieger originals (which inspired critic Robert Christgau to call them a "bar band made in heaven") and covers that range from "Sweetest Boy," a rare Mary Wells gem, to the positively obscure Rory Block song, "A Strong and Lasting Kind."

"I think we're unique," says Cebal, a goateed fellow who talks about music like a soft-

Yakety Yak

It's the perfect group, it's perfect rock music, it has every facet. That sounds terribly arrogant, but it's just that, whether you like it or not, there's nothing wrong with it.

—John Taylor
on The Power Station

It'll be like getting away with murder if it comes off.

—Robert Palmer
on The Power Station



Sharon Farmer

spoken evangelist. "There have been a lot of well-intentioned white folks trying to come to terms with the great black tradition, but most of them have missed the point or just haven't been able to pull it off. I think we're pretty close."

Their heroes are Allan Toussaint and Dave Bartholomew, the musicians who helped introduce the world to Fats Domino and the New Orleans sound. Cebal, who studied music at New College in Sarasota, Florida, was responsible for turning the band's musical interest toward the south. "Lee Dorsey and Eddie Bo are tremendous inspirations to me," he says. "There's nothing around today that compares to them."

Pluer, at 26 the youngest member of the outfit, is the most striking on stage, if you are not distracted by Cebal's slicked hair and stringy beard. She dresses in homemade confections of lace and scarves, with her hair tied up or thrown this way or that. Her voice which netted her an audition for the Broadway production of *Leader of the Pack* has been compared to every singer imaginable. But that's not her, she says. The songs, which reflect blues and pop rhythms, but

Squeeze Gently

Talented songwriting duo Chris Difford and Glen Tilbrook have joined up with old allies Jools Holland and Gilson Lavis to re-form Squeeze. The band parted ways three years ago after releasing a string of highly respectable albums which culled comparisons to Lennon and McCartney. At presstime, the band was putting the finishing touches on an album set for release here this summer. There is also talk of a US tour later this year.

R&B Cadets (from L to R) John Sieger, Robyn Pluer, Paul Cebal, Bob Jennings. (Bottom) Mike Sieger, Bob Schneider.

lean towards the eight-bar blues of Huey Smith, recently caught the attention of English rock musician Nick Lowe, a man with an unquenchable thirst for American music. His enthusiasm for the Cadets resulted in an offer to produce their first single, "A Strong and Lasting Kind." The song jumps off the tape. Beginning with drums and Robyn's "I love you, baby," it winds into a Phil Spector-like criss-crossing saxophone romp. If this doesn't sell, nothing will, they figure.

Certain record-company personnel have told the Cadets that they should change themselves to fit the commercial and predictable formats Cebal has spent years trying to avoid. "They don't want you to do too many things," he says. "They really don't want well-rounded human beings. But we believe in what we're doing enough to resist that. We just hope people enlist in our program and come to terms with different traditions."

So do we.

—Dan Racine

Individually
they're...



Capitol



JOHN TAYLOR



TONY THOMPSON



ANDY TAYLOR

Together
they're...

POWER STATION

Featuring their first single **SOME LIKE IT HOT**

Produced by Bernard Edwards



Ed Colver

Tex and the Horseheads

From the seedy, seamy streets of downtown Hollywood, where no problem's too big for a pint of Jack Daniel's, comes Tex and the Horseheads. Fronted by gravel-voiced cocktail waitress Linda "Texacala" Jones, the band plays bluesy booze 'n' roll, distilled from the legends of Janis Joplin and the good-dreams-gone-bad of their hometown. The name "Tex" began as a high-school joke: the discrepancy between Jones' small frame and her huge, booming voice. "I added the 'acala' later," she says, "because I'm a Cala-fornia native."

Aiding and abetting her in the band are guitarist Mike Martt, who lays down sinewy, squealing guitar streaks to go with his Neil Young nasal whine, and bassist Smog Vomit. As for the "Horseheads" part of the name, Tex denies any drug reference was intended. "We were sitting around before the first gig, trying to come up with a name for the marquee, when somebody thought of *The Godfather*. You know: the scene where the guy goes to his bed, pulls down the sheets and... That's how we got the Horseheads."

The band's first record was a flexi-disc included free inside a 1982 issue of the Boston-based rock magazine *Take It*. It featured a rough-and-tumble, Western-influenced Tex backed by the Gun Club's bluesy Jeffrey Lee Pierce. She's equally brash and brawny on the Bemisbrain label's *Hell Comes to Your*

House Part II, an eight-band compilation album. And though her singing is more mature and controlled on the band's debut LP, *Tex and the Horseheads* (Bemisbrain/Enigma), her stage show remains raw and theatrical. Tex and company is a bar band in the truest sense of the word, churning out night-party tunes from R&B roots, country branches, and rock traditions. On stage, on and under tables, and always under the influence, the band is known for its club antics as they rasp their burly, brawly, simple songs into the late and small hours.

—Andrea 'Enthal

Hiroshima

The Japanese town of Hiroshima will host its first-ever open-air pop festival this August, 40 years after the United States flattened it with a nuclear bomb. At prestime, Led Zeppelin's former manager Peter Grant was negotiating with artists such as Duran Duran, Stevie Wonder, Tina Turner, Style Council, Hall and Oates and the Thompson Twins to appear in the two live concerts under the banner "Hiroshima Rocks for Peace '85." Another concert will also be held in Tokyo during the same week. Organizers are expecting a turnout of 450,000, plus a satellite audience of some 650 million.

—Jessica Berens

Listen to His Art Beat

Jonathan Borofsky once painted a beautiful blue-gray running man right on the Berlin wall. Usually he paints on canvas, but sometimes he saws the canvas in half, or he might write on the wall next to the frame: "This painting is unfinished." He makes sculptures of falling men that are startlingly realistic when hung from invisible wires, and he makes giant men out of bubble wrap (they do push-ups very slowly).

Lots of artists talk about being renaissance men, but Jonathan Borofsky does something about it. He's a terrific painter and sculptor, but he has also counted from one to about 2,900,000 on graph paper, and by the time you read this he will be nearing the 3,000,000 mark.

A huge retrospective of his work is coming soon to a museum sort of near you: University Art Museum, Berkeley, April 17 through June 16; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, September 14 to October 27; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., November 30 to February 2.

At any one of these spots you'll be able to see his counting-to-infinity ledgers, view his paintings and sculptures and listen to them, too. Some of them sing. *Dancing Clown* mixes painting with sculpture and music. Hidden inside it is a cassette player endlessly broadcasting Borofsky's version of the classic "I Did It My Way." His arrangement reflects an understanding of Jamaican dub as well as American funeral-parlor organ music. When you think about it—and the way he sings it, you tend to—"My Way" is the ultimate art anthem.

—Glenn O'Brien



Jon Borofsky

Listen to his art beat—Jonathan Borofsky has got your number.

Other paintings sing other Borofsky tunes and the museum public-address systems are also programmed with ambient tapes of things like army drill teams, ringing telephones, bird calls, a tobacco auction, wolves howling, rifle shots and thousands more noisy things. You can also hear the sound of Ping-Pong played live, as one of Borofsky's sculptures is a real Ping-Pong table on which one can actually play. It is painted in camouflage. One side of the net is marked "U.S.A.," the other side is marked "U.S.S.R.," both sides are marked "\$300,000,000,000," a military-budget ballpark figure. One paddle is red; the other is blue. It's great to play Ping-Pong in a museum, with all of those great paintings hanging around. And every once in a while, Borofsky's voice comes over the intercom: "Attention shoppers... attention shoppers..."

Bloc and Roll: the Fun Rises in the East

Lady Pank's recent signing to MCA has sparked an interest in Poland's music scene. They may be the first Warsaw band to land such a deal, but they could pave the cultural way for their fellow musicians. "A lot of people are looking on Poland as a Liverpool situation," insists one of their representatives, Tim Brack. "People are flying over to see what is happening there."

Lady Pank came to their manager Brian Kee's attention when he was handed a tape at the Midem festival. He persuaded the record company to dispatch a representative to Poland, and the result is the release of their album *Drop Everything*, helpfully rendered in English. The album is a collection of pop songs that show respectable musicianship, and manage to be unconvinced without being simplistic. Lady Pank's stature in their own country is Duranesque, but they have had to combat problems most Western musicians could not imagine.

First and foremost is the shortage of vinyl. "A million people may want our LP, and the factory will only produce 100,000," says lyricist Andrzej Mogielnicki. "There is only one factory in Poland which produces vinyl, and that is an ammunition factory. Vinyl is not needed; ammunition is. Therefore, no one really cares how much vinyl is produced." All Mogielnicki songs have to go before a censor before they can be recorded, a phenomenon that may inhibit his creativity, but one which he has come to accept. "The radio may not play them, but we can do them live," he shrugs. He does describe



Andrzej Tykacz

some of their material as "subversive," but most of the album deals with the usual musings of rock dreamers—sex ("you could scratch my itch"), girls ("see her smile in her limousine"), sex ("needed someone to cuddle"), girls ("Groupies gather round again"). Only "The Zoo that Has No Keeper" is more sinister ("the dogs of war scare and reassemble . . . outside my door four men are waiting"), but the somewhat abstract political references are disguised by an incongruously lighthearted melody.

Lady Pank have had three hits in their country. The charts are not decided by record sales, but by radio listeners who telephone their votes into various radio station "hotlines," across the country. Airplay is a band's blood, but live performances are how they make money. Lady Pank's recent trip to America was the first time any of the five musicians had been out of Poland, but their musical heritage lies firmly in the West. They want to meet Randy Newman, Mick Jagger, Eric Clapton and Keith Richards ("I love him," says bassist Pawel Mscislawski). They like Billy Idol, Chicago, Talking Heads and U2. Punk, they say, has recently caught on in Warsaw. "It's a very strong underground movement," says Andrzej. "But they have trouble with the police because they are totally into anarchy."

Karn Get Enough?

Dalis Car has nothing to do with either Salvador Dali or automobiles; it's the name of a new duo featuring Mick Karn and Peter Murphy. Karn was formerly bassist with Japan, a group with no connection to the country, and Murphy was lead singer with Bauhaus, a group with no connection to the German design collective. On balance, you'd have to say Japan had the better name. Before folding two years ago, they were huge in Japan. Bauhaus scored some hits in England with covers of glam-rock classics.

Dalis Car's first album, entitled *The Waking Hour*, is pretentious do-do. Murphy and Karn concentrate on artsy production, self-conscious musical fripperies and obscure lyrics. Perhaps the lyrics are surreal? The single, released in the UK, was called "The Judgment Is in the Mirror." It usually is, if you look.



Lucille Kormanik

Big Boys and Girls Don't Cry

Forget those anorexic sirens; forget the fight to keep light. Who needs Nutrasweet anyway? For big treats like the Weather Girls and the Fat Boys, happiness is a wide girl. Here are their secret tips for health, wealth and beauty. *Cosmopolitan* subscribers should stop here.

The Girls

You've heard of brunch? They like that; breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner, too. Not to mention candy, ice cream and Big Macs in between. If every inch of Martha Wash and Izora Armstead is fun, they have a lot of fun. "Largeness is an advantage," they chortle. After the success of their single, "It's Raining Men," the Weather Girls are here again, and the only weight they're watching is the one for the bus. Their new album is called *Big Girls Don't Cry*.

The Body Beautiful

Izora: "I used to be five [hundred] something, but we're slimming down now. I don't think that has any effect on our voices, because when we were skinny, we had big mouths. I don't wanna be a sexy siren. I wanna be a

sexy me."

Martha: "I'm basically fine, very healthy. But I have a problem with my knees and high heels. I can't have knees and high heels at the same time. The only way I could get that thin was if I became deathly ill. I'm serious."

Fad Diets

Izora: "I don't think the good Lord made everybody a size six. If dieting doesn't hurt people, fine, but they should really make sure that it's not an endangerment to their health. It's up to the individual person. If they don't feel bad while they're doing it, go ahead. But if you have to stay on something to make you feel peppy, and then get something to make you sleep and wake you up, you don't need that."

Working Out

Izora: "Yeah. Oh Lord, yes. Not enough. Why be uncomfortable and strain

The Fat Boys (above) pump iron. (l to r) Damon Wimbley, Mark Morales and Darren Robinson. The Weather Girls (right) Martha Wash and Izora Armstead.



Gary Henry



Lucille Khourink

yourself? I'm not doing contortions, I'm not into them." Martha: "There's a lot of ways you can work out; a lot of people consider sex working out. The more enjoyable the workout, the better it is."

Health

Izora: "You have got to have a good feeling about yourself, and it will show around you. Always be yourself. And if you want to survive, you have to get better. You never want to fall into the same traps. I don't want myself on a downer the whole time, and I try not to be that way."

The Secret of Life

Martha: "Get Men. Get Food. Get Money." Izora: "Love it, and have a good lawyer."

The Boys

Damon "Kool Rock-Ski" Wimbley, Darren "The Human Beat Box" Robinson and Mark "Prince Markie Dee" Morales weigh about 747 pounds and have a 128-inch waist, collectively. They rap about food-binging to a dance beat; when they perform, their stomachs, lungs and jaws are going for 45 minutes to an hour, nonstop.

The Fat Boys—work out daily and you too can have bodies like these.

Fat Boy Workout

- 1 sit-up
- 1 push-up
- 1 squat
- 1 bench press (5½ lbs.)

Program consists of one set of one repetition with two hours between each routine.

Fat Boy Diet

Breakfast:

- 2 cheeseburgers
- fries
- soda (large)

Lunch:

- meatball hero
- fried chicken
- soda (large)
- Twinkies (dessert)

Dinner:

- turkey (extra gravy)
- ribs
- potatoes (mashed, baked and fried)
- collard greens
- ice cream, pie and cake (dessert)

Between meals:

- pizza, Snickers, Payday and Mars bars

Fat Boy Tip: Carry lots of change for candy vending machines.

So, now you know.



A Coffee Instead of a Line?

The Coffee Growers Bank sponsors this poster, which can be seen plastered on walls and buildings throughout Colombia. The headline reads: "Don't Take Drugs, Drugs Destroy the Mind." A bizarre advertising campaign for a country renowned for its black coffee and white powder. But, the government in Bogota is beginning to worry seriously about the grave cocaine problem ravaging Colombian youth.

—Nancy Solomon

Yakety Yak

I don't think New York did very much for Sid.

—Malcolm McLaren

The Prince Pretenders

The Ron Smith Celebrity Look-Alikes agency recently launched its national search for Prince look-alikes in New York, and it was amazing just how much the dozen contestants looked like Prince, and how unlike each other. Look-alikes for James Dean, Reggie Jackson, Clark Gable and New York Mayor Ed Koch judged the applicants on their resemblance to Prince. Twenty-four-year-old shoe salesman Lester La Prince was one of four winners.

Send in the clones—the Prince look-alike contest in New York.



Elizabeth McCaughy

LESTER: I didn't start out wanting to look like Prince or wanting to do his thing. At first it bugged me that people were ringing my phone and old girlfriends were coming after me because I look like him. But after I done got over the head trip, I turned it around to where it became profitable.

SPIN: How profitable?

LESTER: About \$1,000 a month since November. I'd pull up in my 1984 black Camaro Princemobile, walk into a club with my bodyguards and get drinks on the house, the whole deal. Once I get the managers of the clubs going along with it—once they see that I'm not him—then we talk money. And there's a lot of fringe benefits; a lot of women, a lot of drinks. The money goes towards the outfits and to keep us moving, paying for gas. The rest goes into my pocket.

SPIN: Do you really look this way or do you make yourself up to look like him?

LESTER: No, I really look like him. The only thing that's different is the makeup. I don't normally walk around with eye makeup on.

SPIN: How far can you go before people find out you're not Prince?

LESTER: I can go right up to people and tell them I'm not Prince and they won't believe me. Then I'll have to point things out, like the dimple on my chin, or my nose is a little wider. I can take it all the way, but I never do that. I spend more time telling people I'm not Prince than that I am.

SPIN: Won't it be a liability to look like Prince a couple of years from now, when people are sick of him?

LESTER: Then I'll cut my hair. As a character, he's easy to get into and out of. I'm an actor. I get into his character, then let it go.

—Scott Cohen

WIN CLARION'S SPEED OF SOUND SWEEPSTAKES AND KISS YOUR OLD CAR GOODBYE.

Clean out the glove box. Put up the For Sale sign.

Clarion wants you and your honey to hit the road in style this summer.

Behind the wheels of your very own 1985 his and hers Alfa Romeos.

You read right. His and hers Alfa Romeos. The Grand Prize in Clarion's Speed of Sound Sweepstakes.

Second Prize is just as grand. Another Alfa.

In fact, over 275 prizes are up for grabs. Including a European windsurfer, Clarion car stereo systems, Clarion graphic equalizers, and racing jackets.

IT'S EASY TO ENTER

Stop by any participating Clarion dealer for details and fill out an official Speed of Sound Sweepstakes entry form. Enter as often as you like. Then, on August 28, we'll draw 279 entries at

random. If yours is one of them, bingo! You're a winner.

HERE'S WHAT YOU WIN.

Grand Prize. A 1985 Alfa Romeo GTV-6 coupe and a 1985 Alfa Romeo Spider Veloce convertible.

Second Prize. A 1985 Alfa Romeo Spider Veloce convertible.

Third Prize. A twelve-foot long, European designed windsurfer.

25 Fourth Prizes. A

Clarion 8550R AM/FM stereo cassette receiver car system with 621SE 6½ inch coaxial speakers.

50 Fifth Prizes. A Clarion 100 EQB5 Equalizer/Booster. 5-band controls. 50 watts maximum output, with front to rear fader control.

200 Sixth Prizes. A contemporary styled nylon racing jacket.



Clarion
CAR AUDIO
MOVING AT THE SPEED OF SOUND

Any licensed driver may enter. No purchase is necessary. Sweepstakes ends July 31, 1985.

So, register for Clarion's Speed of Sound Sweepstakes. Because, if you win, you can kiss one old car goodbye. And embrace two new ones.



The Sure Thing

Guys love her and girls hate her. It's easy to see why. Nicollette Sheridan is *The Sure Thing*, the stunning California dreamgirl in the movie with the same title. Nicollette is living proof that a beautiful face, a great body, brains and lots of talent are all you need to be an international star. I love her.

Although just 21 years old, Nicollette was a successful model before turning to acting. Connoisseurs of beauty will remember her from TV commercials for Sasson jeans, Doritos chips and A-1 Steak Sauce, or on the covers of *Cosmopolitan* and *California* magazines.

Nicollette was born in Sussex, England, and spent her early childhood there. Then she moved to Los Angeles with her mother, brother, and her then-stepfather, Telly Savalas. She attended the Buckley School, a private high school in Sherman Oaks, California, but spent her senior year at Millfield, an exclusive boarding school in England. While at school, she began modeling.

"I never wanted to be a model," says Nicollette. "I've wanted to be an actress ever since I was 16 years old and appeared in my first play."

After returning to Los Angeles from Europe, she hired a manager and an agent. Both urged her to continue modeling, and to accept parts in TV commercials in order to gain camera experience. Within a mere two months, this goddess landed a leading role in *Paper Dolls*, an ABC Movie of the Week starring Morgan Fairchild. She won a recurring role as Taryn Blake, the lost and lonely 16-year-old model, when the movie was launched as a TV series.

"I finished *Paper Dolls*, the movie, in February 1984, and the same month auditioned for *The Sure Thing*," recalls Nicollette. "It was real chaotic because I had gotten a call from my agent only a half-hour before I was supposed to read for the role. I picked up the script and ran over to the audition, thinking I'd have a chance to look over my lines before they called me. But they brought me right in, and I read without ever looking at the script. I guess if it's meant to be, it will."

More recently, she starred in an episode of "Murder on the Rocks," a mystery series. "I want to be considered a very serious actress," says the



Brown girl in a white bikini.

long-legged beauty. To that end, she is taking acting lessons.

Her exercise routine is equally demanding: a few sit-ups and a jog on the beach with her cocker spaniel. She doesn't consider herself a health fanatic, but her diet is mostly fish, vegetables, salads and grains. She seldom wears makeup, preferring instead the natural look. "I'm not a typical California blonde," says Nicollette. I couldn't agree more.

If you have an urgent need to speak with her, or just to propose, she can be contacted at (213) 550-0570, or at 9200 Sunset Blvd., Suite 808, Los Angeles, CA 90069. One other thing: Don't be fooled by the receptionist.

—Edward Rassen

Pirates of the High Cs

At a thatched-roofed kiosk way out in the boonies of Borneo—37 years upriver by speedboat from the nearest phone, car or TV—a pirated

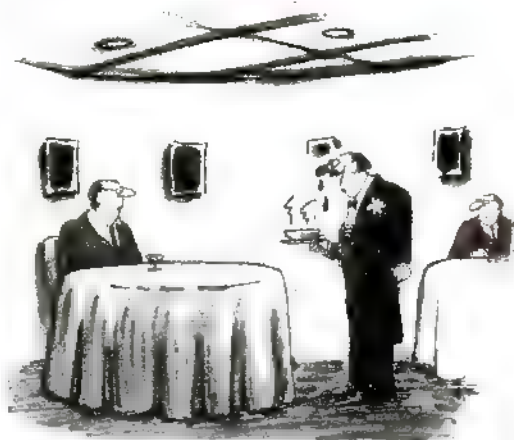
cassette of "Psycho Killer" by the Talking Heads was heard blasting from a tape recorder. A group of naked kids—the children of retired Dayak headhunters—practiced their hottest breakdance moves at the edge of the jungle, within earshot of orangutans, pythons, rhinos and bellowing elephants. No one would've batted an eye if Grandmaster Flash had appeared out of the blue to yelp a duet with a yodeling dodo. Even further away from so-called civilization, Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." was the big hit. Even though the listeners had never heard of America, Reagan, or California, they sure knew Michael Jackson, Bob Marley, Mick Jagger and Bruce Springsteen. At a remote village in Sumatra, it was a wee bit uncanny to find tapes by Patti Smith, Jackie Wilson, Lou Reed, Al Green, Howling Wolf, King Sunny Ade, Leonard Cohen, Mikey Dread, Eek-A-Mouse and Philip Glass—some of which are not that easy to find in New York or L.A.

American and European musicians, songwriters and

record companies are being bilked to the tune of \$1,000,000 annually by swashbuckling pirates prowling the high Cs of counterfeit cassette copyright capers. The latest American, European, and Australian music is duplicated and distributed so quickly that, within a matter of days after the original is released in the U.S. or England, the copies are being sold in cities, towns and hamlets throughout South East Asia. Operating from studios tucked away in the back streets of Singapore, Jakarta and Surabaya, the Asian music pirates produce and distribute the bulk of the worldwide trade in contraband tapes.

The pirate copies are not inferior counterfeits being passed off as the real McCoy—they are, in fact, much better than the originals in every respect. The copies sound better, last longer, and are packaged more attractively than their authentic counterparts. Each cassette contains a full 90 minutes of music—usually, two complete albums. The covers are reprints of the original art work. A major improvement over the originals is that the copies include fold-out booklets containing complete song lyrics. The retail price for these superior musical packages is an incredibly low \$1.35 each. No wonder foreign tourists gobble them up by the trunk load.

The pirates are performing an important cultural service by producing a product of exceptional quality and selling it for an affordable price to hundreds of millions of people in low-income Third World nations who are hungry for Western music—especially in developing countries, where per-capita incomes are \$500 or less annually.



"The soup smells terrific today, sir!"

The distribution network of the pirate tapes is so far-reaching that it extends all the way to the borderline of the surreal. The cassettes are distributed everywhere, including way out in nowhere. A recent SPIN survey of tape outlets in Borneo, Sumatra, Bali, Java, Sulawesi and New Guinea revealed an astonishing array of the latest rock, rap, reggae, disco, jazz, funk, fusion, pop, classical, country, blues, opera—even salsa, juju, oldies, big band, and hardcore punk. Frankie Goes to Hollywood in Toraja, Sulawesi? Madonna in Klungkung, Bali? Prince and the Revolution comes to Halmahera? The Miami Sound Machine in Tasikmalaya, Java? "We Are the World" is moving up on the invisible charts smack in the middle of nowhere, serving the people a catchy cultural CARE package of down-home, foot-stomping foreign aid. Yes, they know it's Christmas—thanks to the pirates.

—Gordon Bishop



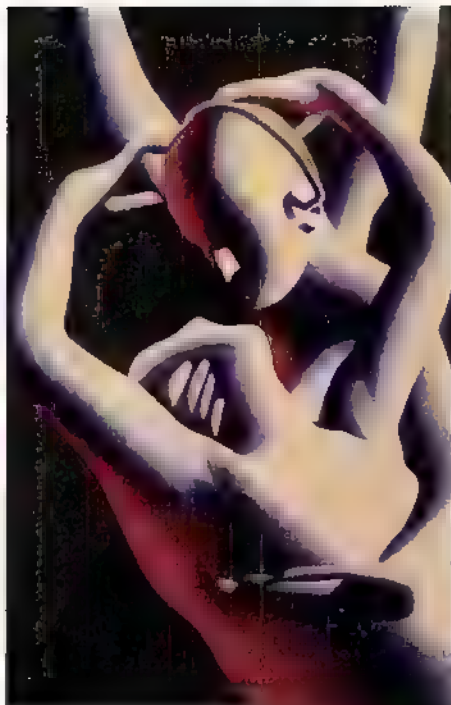
Jakartagate—the black market cassettes flooding South East Asia.

TEENAGE SEX

The author
doesn't think there
should be any.

Article by Wally George

Paintings by Mark Kostabi



"The music
they play promotes
illicit sex and drugs!"

If you teen girls reading this article still believe that you've got to "jump in the sack" with your dates to stay popular or "in," let me tell you something: You're really "out!"

The new "Reagan Revolution" has taken hold all across this land, and with it comes the new sexual revolution! This one makes the bold statement that sex is not "required," and if your current romantic interest doesn't like it—that's tough!

Teenage girls are learning that they can say "no" and mean it, and that they have really got to take the lead in setting the rules. It may sound chauvinistic to say the female must be the one to decide if and when a sexual encounter is going to take place. But let's face it—that's the way it is. The male always has and always will feel that it is the "masculine" thing to make a pass and suggest a frolic between the sheets. If he doesn't at least try, then he's on the road to "fagdom!" Silly? Probably. Can it be changed? Probably not! Unfair? You're darn right it is. But that's the way life is. Girls have got to realize that they are the ones who call the moral shots, and they've got to accept that responsibility.

Remember the corny scenes in those B-movies where the girl reluctantly agrees to go to bed with the guy? She always asks: "But will you still respect me in the morning?"

He always replies with a sneer: "Sure, baby, of course I will. I love you!"

Hey, girls, let me tell you the truth! He won't respect you in the morning, and he most likely doesn't love you. He probably doesn't even know what the word means! If he really does love you, chances are he'll change his mind if you're too "easy."

Yes, guys do talk about their "sexual conquests," and if you're on the "list" you're not likely to have a nice guy think serious thoughts about you. No man wants a "loose chick" as his steady or future wife. Not unless he's a moronic pervert—and do you want to end up with one of those?

This whole thing about teenage sex started to get way out of hand back in the '60s. That's when "shacking up" was the thing to do and marriage was just too stupid to even talk about. It all went hand in hand with the "turn-on/tune-out" philosophy of such jerks as Timothy Leary. The big things in life were demonstrations against the Vietnam war, getting high on drugs, and

having sex with the nearest person available. It was sickness at its worst! Morality among teens in this country was practically nonexistent. We were really scrapping the bottom of the barrel!

The weak leadership in this country had a lot to do with this concept of morality. I mean, how could you respect a low-life, crude president like Lyndon Johnson, who dictated to his press secretary while seated on the toilet in his private presidential bathroom?

Richard Nixon could have made a difference, but the liberal press destroyed him with Watergate. I think he was sandbagged, but that's another story.

Then along came Jimmy Carter, who admitted in an interview that he had "lusted in his heart" after beautiful women during his marriage, and then proceeded to make an ass out of himself with the most spineless presidency in our nation's history.

No wonder the teenagers of America turned to sex and drugs. They had lost confidence in their leaders and, slowly, with the country itself.

The media had a lot to do with it, too. Rock 'n' roll kept grinding out Top 40 hits featuring lyrics promoting and glamorizing sex and drugs.

Movies made for the teen market had the same revolting message: "Let's have a party, get high and have sex! Hey, it's fun! It's what's happening!"

A turnaround started to take place in 1980 with the election of Ronald Reagan. Young people had been hungry for a hero, and there he was! "Mr. Nice Guy," the perfect father image, standing up for God and country, morality, decency, dignity, law and order and the family unit. It was like John Wayne riding into the White House on a shiny white horse. They listened to what this man had to say, and they bought it! Finally, a real live hero was in charge—someone the young people could look up to, admire and emulate.

All of a sudden, marriage looked good again, as we watched a happily married couple hold hands and show affection for each other in public. It was refreshing and delightful.

Yes, a turnaround is taking place across this land, but the battle isn't over. We still have a long way to go. The "enemy" still hasn't conceded.

Who is the enemy? Well, it takes many forms. One is the rock jocks and many Top 40 radio stations.

I interviewed a popular southern California deejay

on my "Hot Seat" program a few months ago. His name is Richard Blade, and he's on KROQ-FM. Blade has a tremendous following among teens and preteens. I put him on "Hot Seat" because I was disgusted with the things that were going on during his and other programs on that station.

"Richard," I lamented, "you and your pals on that station are always talking about sex. I think it's wrong, because your following is made up of kids. You say very filthy things, and that's wrong!"

Blade just laughed, suggesting that I was "old-fashioned—still living in the '50s," and that I had to "get with it . . . and into the '80s."

I asked him how old he thought a teenage girl should be before she "jumped in the sack" with a boy. He thought it over for a moment and then replied, "I think 13 would be a proper age for a girl, if she wanted to."

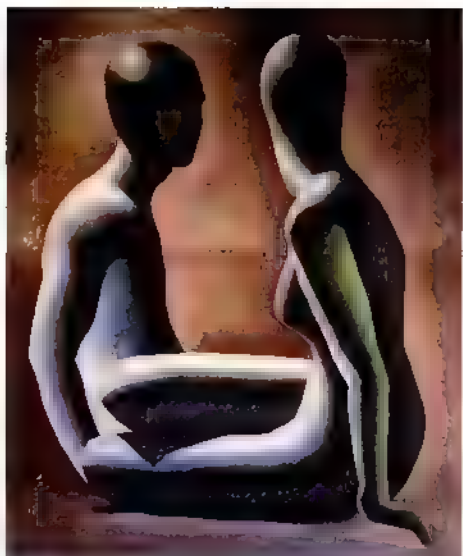
"Thirteen? That's a baby!" I wasn't shocked to hear it, though. That's typical of so-called "hip" rock jocks across the country. The music they play promotes illicit sex or drugs—and usually both!

Films made for young moviegoers are worse than ever. I've seen many of them, so I know what I'm talking about. I was frankly embarrassed to watch Prince fondle a young girl's groin and then slap her around the room in *Purple Rain*. Hundreds of kids—13, 14, and 15—were watching with their eyes popping out. Their hero, Prince, was prancing around like some sex pervert—and a sadistic one at that.

Yes, the enemy is out there, and I'm doing my part to help the President of the United States turn things around.

The main problem is that we have almost done away with adolescence. Kids are going directly from childhood to adulthood. The minute you turn 13, it's time for sexual fun and games. Wrong!

What's happened to the "dating years"? Kids are missing out on a whole lot of great, wholesome fun. I'm talking about the teen years, years that can be tender, warm and meaningful . . . teen males and females slowly growing to enjoy each other and gradually edging toward real love and, eventually, marriage. It's really sad for me to think that millions of teenagers have never experienced a normal Saturday-night date: meeting a girl at her house and taking her to a local movie . . . holding hands and, yes, even exchanging a few kisses



Mark Kostabi

... hot popcorn, a Coke, meeting friends in the lobby, and then grabbing a hamburger together on the way home.

I look back and relish my dating years. I wouldn't have missed them for anything. It's all a part of growing up; all a part of life itself.

Why race through any part of our lives? Every year brings another new experience. Every age is a special one, and the special feelings you feel then, you will never experience again.

Adolescence is probably the most precious of all times. It's like a flower unfolding into full bloom. It's not a thing to be rushed or passed over.

Hey, don't get me wrong. I'm the first to admit that young people are filled with wild thoughts of sex, and there's nothing wrong with that. But what's the big rush? Take your time, live life one day, one month, one year at a time—and enjoy it all!

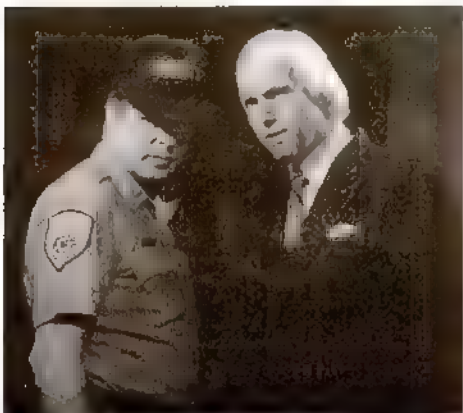
Being an adult is really great. You get to do whatever you want to do. You're in charge of your life and all that. But you reach adulthood very quickly, and then there's no turning back.

Sex is one of the most beautiful things human beings can share. But it should be an expression of love, not just an animalistic act.

We keep reading about teen pregnancies, and abortions being used as a "contraceptive." It's wrong.

The subject of this article is teenage sex. The closing line goes like this: "There shouldn't be any!"

Wally George (below, in suit), the infamous host of *Hot Seat*, a nationally syndicated radio and television talk show, has been married and divorced four times.



Edward Rosen

EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN: Nobody Knows the Rubble I've Seen.

Article by Sue Cummings

The subway train is coming. You see its headlights shining down the tunnel like the lamp on a miner's cap. When it roars into the station, acrid steel dust stings your nose and the wheels throw a heavy blanket of noise over commuter conversation. The loud-speaker squeals unintelligibly.

Einstürzende Neubauten is a sonic subway ride. In German, the name means "Collapsing New Buildings." The band constructs its instruments from industrial refuse: oil drums, cement mixers, air-conditioning ducts, glass, old radios, scrap metal, wood and plastic, even flesh. They "play" these objects with metal rods, lead mallets, power drills and fire. Marc Chung's bass and Blixa Bargeld's guitar are the last remnants of conventional musicianship. But even these two instruments appear in a context of cacophony, and Blixa, also the vocalist, says he cannot sing and play at the same time.

Ever since someone, somewhere, plugged in and strummed those first four chords, rock 'n' roll has been furiously barricading itself into a corner. In some ways, as pop music expanded, it stiffened and became more predictable. Unfortunate, but inevitable. So anyone looking for the original, unsettled spirit of rock naturally would be looking elsewhere. To synthesizers? Neubauten have chosen, instead, to synthesize.

"There was a critic for the last record saying that the bass line was played by a synthesizer," says Blixa, whose name is taken from a German brand of ballpoint pen. *Drawings of O.T.* (PVC/Jem), however, did not have any synthesizers. "They have a fixed idea . . . they can tell all the instruments of the orchestra, an electric guitar, or bass—but anything else is always 'a synthesizer.'" Preconceived notions are Neubauten's prime target for destruction; their new EP contains a version of "Sand," a love song once performed by Nancy Sinatra.

Neubauten is really two bands. One is to be heard live; the other, safely on stereo. At home, you control the volume; as the listener you're also free to conjure imagery unconnected to the objects that inspire it. In performance, the band is deafening, and even dangerous. In L.A. an onstage fire got out of hand and completely destroyed the Balcave stage props set up for the second act. This occurred after N.U. Unruh had unleashed his road drill and showered some record company executives dining in the basement with falling plaster. News of the turmoil got back to New York faster than the band did. When they played their final U.S. concert at Danceteria, someone arranged for a man with a fire extinguisher to be standing ready.

Flames are often a part of their stage show. "How do you do it?" I asked Blixa.

"Molotov cocktails," he replied indifferently.

"What?" I didn't know whether to believe him or not.

"You don't know what a Molotov cocktail is?" He delivered the description in a thick German accent, savoring every detail. "It's a bottle two-thirds full of gasoline and one-third air. You close it up with a bandage. The proportions of the material inside the bottle—I don't know what it is exactly, but it doesn't just light up, it explodes. A little bomb."

Blixa insists that they never intend to hurt anyone. A story he is fond of repeating to journalists concerns a fan with an arm in bandages, who visited Blixa to deliver his compliments on a performance. The fan had been injured during the concert. "He didn't look un-



Bleday Bulcher

Einstürzende Neubauten (from left to right: Blixa Bargeld, N.U. Unruh, Marc Chung, and Multi Einheit) are seen here setting fire to some things.

happy," says Blixa. "It's true; he liked it. I've never met someone that said anything against getting hurt. They've all felt really amazed about it. And when we use a Molotov cocktail, most of the time we get hurt."

Obviously, anything that gets burned or drilled has to be replaced eventually. Thus, the band's collection of instruments is disposable, and undergoes continual metamorphosis. When Neubauten toured the U.S., much of their equipment was too large to ship by plane, or even to transport from town to town. Therefore, they scavenged for objects before each gig. "Want to know where we found them?" Blixa asks mischievously. "Most of the things we find are around the venue itself; more or less, there's always a bit of junk laying around. It was a real problem in Los Angeles—too clean! We had to drive to a commercial, professional scrapyard."

Neubauten is not the first band to use construction equipment, or to orchestrate chaos, or to celebrate impending apocalypse. Like the punks before them, they drill, shatter, beat, burn, and exquisitely torture what Blixa calls "fixed ideas." But behind the listener's throbbing eardrums, the drowsy inner ear awakes to a realization: This is music. Sometimes, angry music: "Hell belongs to us anyway/Why should we share heaven?" ("Die Zeichnungen des Patienten O.T."). Sometimes it is sad, as in "Armenia," an eloquent collage of folk songs from a culture in exile.

What happens after all the factories close? Berliners, like this band, already know the real meaning of "after the war." Neubauten propose a post-industrial faith in the human ability to pick up the pieces—to Americans, who've so far felt their "day after" as nothing more than a hangover.



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REBORN ON THE BAYOU

Ten years ago, at the height of an incredible career, John Fogerty wandered off to become that great American eccentric, the one man band.

Article by Bart Bull

You can't know—though nobody said you couldn't take a guess—if it was all so simple, so cut-and-dried, so Perfectly Conceived for the heroic purposes of the magazine profile, so ripe and plump and artfully stuffed that even the most inspirational of cover-story headlines ("The Return of John Fogerty;" "John Fogerty's Triumphant Return;" "The Second Coming of John Fogerty;" "Creedence's John Fogerty: And in the Tenth Year, He Rose Again") begin to seem about right. Fogerty may very well have set straight out to become A Real American Voice, and no more complicated than that. You can't know, but you can guess—and one of Fogerty's own songs has the final word on it. One nearly always will.

In "Cross-Tie Walker" (from *Green River*, a good 15 years ago), he remembers: "Pulling out of the station/There was no brass band. . . ."

If all the rapid reassessing that's been going on regarding Fogerty seems maybe a little frantic, there's good reason for it. A year ago, or even just a few months ago, in the absence of new product, a new record company and a new promotional push, you couldn't have gotten a story about John Fogerty printed in a major music magazine if you'd been the owner's son. Now, not long after the arrival—should it be *Arrival*?—of *Centerfield*, his first record in 10 years, he's suddenly hot property again.

Well, maybe Fogerty *did* set about something as simple as making himself into A

Real American Voice. Maybe he did it just so he could make the writers of rock profiles even more positive about the probability of an orderly universe, just so he could eventually make sure his new record company and the music magazines would all have fresh patriotic product in time for A New American Revolution. Or maybe it was even simpler; maybe he just wanted to see if he couldn't sing like he was black.

Maybe you have to give it a try if you want to be A Real American Voice. It's about as common a cultural urge as white Americans have got—we've been doing it for centuries now without quitting once. The urge is irresistible, all the more because it's always been done so badly nearly every single time. Fascinated by our failure to produce an even adequate imitation of our very own devilish American darkies, until the change in proximity of the 1950s we rigorously road-tested each successive set of immigrants to see if the Micks or the Yids or maybe even the Armenians held the hidden key to authentic stage-cooning. The Big Baby-Booming Chill Theory of Cultural Catharsis to the contrary, it didn't end with the '60s either, but simply folded in on itself, with the folkified romanticization of the (preferably elderly-to-dying) (preferably rural) (preferably acoustic) (preferably politically-correct) (preferably previously all-but-unknown) Negro, as portrayed—better yet!—by a college student who both cared and was concerned as both. Mmmmm-HMMMMM! *Beat me, Daddy, eight to the bar!*

The roster of white entertainers who have been able to wrestle out a compromise with the unanswerable sound of black American singing and still avoid signing an unconditional aesthetic surrender to post-greasepaint minstrelsy runs only a little longer than the gaps in a list that goes like this: Jimmie Rodgers, Bill Monroe, Hank Williams, Elvis Presley. The question was never really, "Can a white man play the blues?" though the nimble-fingered white guitar-heros of the big '60s blues revivals would have loved to have us believe it. The question that really counted was: "Can a white man sing the blues?" The answer has always been a flat and simple "No."

The people like Elvis and Rodgers and Hank and Monroe—people like Jack Teagarden and Bob Wills, as well—were southerners of the trashier classes, and they grew up in closer proximity to blacks than most Americans would probably have chosen if druthers defined economics. They were in a tradition even as they went and busted out; tradition was there for them to fall back into if they failed, or if they lived long enough to retire with defiance. And they were, after all, always free, white, and clever.

Fogerty was little but a white kid from El Cerrito, California, a sunny suburb on San Francisco's East Bay, wedged in between the intellectually-elevated highlands of Berkeley and the gas-slick mudflats of Richmond, a low-rent refinery/shipping/industrial town. Richmond and Oakland and even the flatlands of Berkeley itself were filled with blacks who'd

arrived from Louisiana and other Parts South with the last world war and the prospect of high-paying defense work. But this is not the story of young Johnny Fogerty pedaling his shiny Schwinn down San Pablo Avenue to East 14th, Oakland's own little Beale Street, there to be initiated first-hand into the gutbucket rituals of the blues by a mysterious, kindly Negro. Fogerty would dive into American traditions that shouldn't have, by rights, belonged to him. He would instruct himself, and the blackest mysteries he would seek would be locked in the grooves of 45-rpm records.

In 1964, his band went into the studio for the first time, wearing a name that surely seemed a smirk-inducing anachronism according to somebody-at-the-record-company's sense of hipsterism. Since 1959 they'd been the Blue Velvets, but when they were handed their first actual record, the label around the big hole said they were The Golliwogs. In clumsy honor of the recent invasion of British guys with their hair combed forward, their new course had been set for them. They were Golliwogs—grotesque things, raggedy, little goggle-eyed niggerbabes, Buckwheats, Topsyies, smilin', shufflin' shines. So be it.

Golliwog or Blue Velvet, John Fogerty sang about as much like a black man as the best of the white boys (Van Morrison of Ireland's Them) and better than most (Eric Burdon, say, or Mick Jagger), which is to say, not all that great. His older brother Tom sang about as bad as any white boy trying to decide if he'd really



Dave Frank



Just Looms

*Somewhere I lost connections
I ran out of songs to play. . . .*

rather be in the Beatles or the Beach Boys. As the wimpier singer in a band minstrelizing the Merseyside Sound, Tom quite justifiably got the earliest recorded lead vocals, singing on the first three singles, which bombed about appropriately. Not bound for failure, John took over the singing after that.

As a band, they weren't past stealing from the British invaders, but they weren't anything like adept at it. Their only semi-big demi-hit was called "Brown-Eyed Girl" (not that "Brown-Eyed Girl," though you keep expecting Fogerty to holler, "And huh name is/GEEEEEE . . ."), and there's another called, with precision proto-Creedence paranoia, "You Better Get It Before It Gets You," that being a reject outtake printed directly from the blueprint of the Rolling Stones' "The Last Time." The big heat from Liverpool and London had kicked the props out from under him, had set his gyros to wobbling.

He had stopped pretending to be the people he really wanted to be and was settling for being one of a hundred thousand earnest American Beatle imitations. If nothing else, he never seems to have developed an English accent.

What he had that the worst of the white boys would never know was fear. Not paranoia, really, as it's been suggested of late, or a really depressing case of modernist angst. Not even stage-fright—just fear. One of the Golliwogs tunes in their Wannabee Beatles mode was called "Fragile Child," and while John considered such risky business as *knocking . . . on some . . . girl's . . . door*, the *de rigueur* chimed-in chorus was: "I wouldn't do that, I wouldn't do that. . . ."

So his first fear is the wimpy white guy's fear of whoever he's writing all those Little-Girl-Don't-Tell-Me-No-Lies-Does-Your-Mama-Know-You-Can't-Be-True-You-Better-Be-Careful songs at—probably Mom; it's pure, archetypal male-white-teen stuff of the day. And like the rest of the guys singing in bands, he finds that the more you sing like a grit-eating bluesman, the rougher and tuffer you sound. It's nothing new, but it's rich soil all the same.

The fear extended itself with "Walking on the Water," where the Golliwog rubbed his eyes and tried to decide if he was seeing Jesus or a ghost, leaving us to wonder which one would be worse. He was off the trail now, and looking for a new way home. It was '67, the Golliwogs were not quite Creedence Clearwater Revival—"The name was better than we were when we finally decided on the name"—and when Fogerty wasn't working in the warehouse at Fantasy, the little eighth-assed jazz label his band was with, he was off doing his Army Reserve hitch. Staring at spit-shined boots—and maybe stacking boxes of records that didn't have his name on them—he began the story that would be "Porterville." The chorus would chime in: "I don't care/I don't care. . . ."—this time, a classic proto-punk rejection of heritage and the shackles of tradition, the exact same "Who cares?"—or "What? Me worry?"—that had set Elvis and Jimmie and Hank and all the others free, if only for a moment. He was on his way.

He hadn't, on the other hand, arrived. However highly he thought of the new name, it was surely a sop to psychedelia, just as the band's first album would pander to the acid-addled with its long, long, long version of "Suzie Q"—how long was that thing, anyway? Ten minutes? Twelve? Twenty-five?—and its ooooooeeeeeeoooo version of "I Put a Spell on You," which was also the tune that gave his strategy away. If strategy it can be called, because somewhere in here Fogerty stumbled through the trapdoor of psychedelia and came out in the Delta. If acid had triggered fantasies of the Mystic Orient in most of his peers, the high-flying tone of his time and place seemed to push Fogerty into a retreat. He adapted again, but his time it was more cynically done. He had seen the way the foxy old bluesmen had nicely fitted themselves to the sweet expectations of Berkeley Folk Festival-types, and had probably seen as well the way old masters like Chuck Berry and Howlin' Wolf would go hambone day-go to please the hippie hipsters at the Fillmore Ballroom. If he could model himself on them in one way, he could try another; the cheap psychedelia of Creedence Clearwater Revival—most particularly his cheesy tremolo guitar rave-ups—sounds like nothing so much as a business-minded bluesman impressed with the cash to be made by opening for Big Brother and the Holding Company, and hoping soon to be a hippie-dance headliner.

"Waaaal, take me back down awhooo wahdo, ya'll," (or whatever it is he says) "Let me remember things I don't know . . ." (from "Green River"). Go ahead—take a look at the cover of *Green River*: him planted out front on sunny ground with the other three guys already receding back into the shadowy foliage, pulled back into the unforgiving Everglades, back into the unsavory green hills and deep despondent sloughs of the East Bay. He's stood his old-fashioned dobro in front of him, with his hands at rest on top of it, and from beneath his Prince Valiant pudding-bowl bangs comes the stoniest look of solemn arrogance.

He has much to be arrogant about. He has it all, this owner of the world's most

extensive collection of plaid flannel shirts. He'll wear a different one on every album cover from now on—and shitcan the dopey moustache and the Confederate-officer Halloween costume he wore the first album—but the arrogance will remain the same. With hit tunes—singles, in fact, his preferred method of expression—off the first record, and then the one that followed, *Bayou Country*, he has located a place for himself in the world that approximates the place where he believes he belongs. He has pandered for the last time. When an album picture shows a smile—even in the beginning—it's a smile not unlike Bill Monroe's own: slim and self-satisfied. He knows what he has done. And what he owns, other than guitars and flannel shirts, is what he knows. In the end, he won't even own his own songs—but he knows what he has done.

If what he'd done was his own choice, it was still a tougher tarbaby than anyone would be likely to tackle if they knew just how sticky it gets in the end. It's all well and good to play at being a blacksnake bluesman, but the kind of greasypaint Fogerty wore was the kind that won't rub off when the show is over. It wasn't like a Buffalo Bill moustache or a Confederate uniform or even a pair of Beatle boots—if you played at being a black man hard enough, you might find yourself so far on the outside of things, you would never get back. White guys, musicians especially, had played at being black for years. Jazzman/dope-dealer/hepster Mezz Mezzrow and Berkeley-born R&B pioneer Johnny Otis were two white musicians who crossed so far over, they were sure they were black—and once they'd seen how things looked from that side of the line, even surer they never wanted to be called white men again.

It may have been funky, it may have done wonders for his rhythm, but it was sheer hell as well. He had a hoodoo vocabulary, but the gut-wrenching visions of what "Ooby dooby" might really mean were part of the package, too. Like only the wildest of bluesmen and the most saintly of gospel singers, he was seeing phantasms too real not to believe, and too close for comfort. Somewhere within the albums *Bayou Country*, *Green River*, *Willy and the Poor Boys*, and *Cosmo's Factory*, Fogerty stopped playing at spook and became a ghost himself: "Look over yonder, up in the tree/There's a noose hangin' just for me." (from "Feelin' Blue").

Reinventing country-rock in the image and likeness of Elvis's own image, Fogerty wasn't interested in playing cowboy any more (not unless, we might guess, he got to be Deadwood Dick, Hardest Nigger in the West; asked for last words at his hanging, D. D. is said to have growled: "I came to die, not talk"). A bad moon was rising; "I hear the voice of rage and ruin. . . ." he sang, a startling admission in the Peace 'n' Love years, made more peculiar by the fact that the big cathartic disaster he was prophesying was not the coming counter-cultural Revolution, but a small slice of the vengeful destruction of Revelation.

At the time of Crosby, Stills and Nash's ascendancy, he sang in a way that reached across a thousand years to the punk-rock white-boy likes of Joe Strummer and Richard Hell, and they would know ex-

actly what he meant. His Delta would become a nightmare jungle, and he would be running through it all alone. Everyone would hear the sound of his voice and his cries for help, but no one would know who it was that was calling: "Long as I remember, rain's been comin' down/ Clouds of mystery pourin' confusion on the ground. . . ." (from "Who'll Stop the Rain," *Cosmo's Factory*).

And then the Blue Velvets break up. The other members of the band, including a blond older brother who seems more a distant relative now, feel their own genius has been ignored, feel the lambent hippie need to do their own things. *Pendulum*, their first effort without John, wobbled precariously, and *Mardi Gras*—the older brother gone, and the other members in fact doing their atrocious things—was their ignominious end.

After which, Fogerty will wander off to become that honorable American eccentric, the one-man band. Too big a pain-in-the-ass perfectionist to get along, too right to be wrong, he quits his job as John the Baptist and lights out for the Territory wearing a disguise. Playing every instrument on a record released by the Blue Ridge Rangers, he joins Creole clarinetist/historical-visionary Sidney Bechet in the lists of multi-instrumental recording obsessives (Stevie Wonder and Prince will follow). His contractual commitment to the record company—the company that made him a Golliwog, the company where he stocked jazz records, the company he provided with unprecedented cash flow—grows even as his recording stops. To be shed of them at last, he eventually trades them the rights to his Creedence songs in exchange for some unpaid foreign royalties. He won't care for those songs any longer; he'll never play them again, he says. Every time he hears one of his songs, he hears it spinning money for them. It galls him to drive down San Pablo Avenue—from El Cerrito through Berkeley on the way to Oakland—and see the record company's big, shiny-glass building, built with songs that used to be his.

He makes another record all his own in 1975, a subdued record with a few jazz and R&B oldies, a Dixieland horn section, a sense of defeat and a sense of the wonder of survival "And early in the morning," (that harsh and familiar voice strained) "I took an old man home/Left him by the river/Left him all alone. . . ." (from "Where the River Flows," *John Fogerty*).

There would be 10 years until *Centerfield* arrived—we can say *Arrived*—signalling itself in advance with a classically Creedence-ish double-sided single: a rocker on one side, an Elvis-invoking country romp on the other. It was calculated, and a little stiff, too. Part of it was pandering again—the Unfortunate Son pimping the hepcats once more, hedging his bets with loaded dice and drum synths and a letter-perfect Creedence copy. The other part was a little bit nerves and rusty reflexes, and simply the white-boy stiffness he's always swung against. It was a great Creedence copy, though, which mattered a lot, and nobody else was good for even that. One hit record will let you buy into—back into—the game.

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A WILD BOY ALONE

Duran Duran are not splitting, says Nick Rhodes, who has teamed with Simon Le Bon on a new album—their answer to Power Station.

Article by Chrissie Iley

Photography by Johnny Rozsa

Wasting into the lobby of the Paris Plaza Hotel, he appeared nervy, yet superior—an expensive kitten. Would I mind waiting 40 minutes? He had to buy some clothes from Claude Montana. His arrogance is entirely natural, sort of innocent, not something afforded by superstar status. Later, much later, he returned. He hadn't bought anything. "They were just shoulders with bits of leather hanging off them," he explained. The lips are glossed in palest pink, the face coated in Yves Saint Laurent Ivory foundation applied with a palette knife. The kohl eyeliner is smudgy. "Although I'm vain enough to wear it, I'm not vain enough to carry it around with me to touch it up," he offers.

Nick Rhodes is not in Paris simply to swan around designer showrooms or play in cosmetic departments at the Galeries Lafayette. He has been working obsessive, 16-hour days in the studio with Simon Le Bon on their first project outside Duran Duran. Apparently, two poles exist within the band, as the two strive to establish their separate identities. The division started when John and Andy Taylor formed The Power Station with Robert Palmer. Rhodes and Le Bon, after their respective honeymoons, found they had time to do their own thing. Roger Taylor, mediator between the extremes, keeps a foot in each camp.

"We reached the stage where we could afford the time to do something different," says Rhodes, emitting a surprising nasal twang, the characteristic accent of his native Birmingham. "We thought it would be healthy for the next Duran project, because it's so inspiring to suddenly have all this space to work with different people you haven't worked with before."

The combination of musicians working on the as-yet-untitled Rhodes/Le Bon album is certainly interesting: jazz bass player Mark Egan, avant-garde percussionist David Van Tieghem (who has worked with Talking Heads and Laurie Anderson), and Japanese guitarist Masami (who played with Japan). The drums were split

between Roger Taylor and New Yorker Steve Jordan. The most inspired choice, however, was to haul in the inimitable saxophone of Andy McKay from Roxy Music.

The Roxy/Duran comparison has been made before. Duran members grew up listening to Bryan Ferry's glistening group of posers, and started dressing like them in reaction to the grayness of punk. "I guess Andy McKay has always been one of my favorite musicians, and he is better than I ever remember," says Rhodes. "He has the most amazing tone. I love his work. I saw Roxy a lot of times, and it is strange to be working with people you used to go and see. I feel very lucky. It worked out very well. He made an effort to work within the sound we were using, but you can still tell it is him on the tracks."

Listening to one of the tracks, "Missing," one hears McKay's sax fit perfectly. Never raunchy or throaty, but clean and fluid—a ghost of Roxy within an otherwise cerebral territory.

"Roxy Music definitely had an influence on Duran Duran, although not directly within the music. The things they did were just so strong and underrated. *Avalon* was one of the best albums ever made; it's such a pity a lot of people haven't even heard of the album. If you listen to their first, you can tell how way ahead of their time they were. I really do feel they were the best band of the '70s, but I don't feel we are similar to them. Possibly, the parallels are more stylistic."

But the issue goes deeper than that. Like Roxy, Duran adopted a strong commercial image to court success. Unlike Roxy, Duran's price for that success was credibility. The media have always been much more interested in the color of their suits and the labels on their underwear than in the caliber of their music. (Some opinion exists that, in this case, the color of their suits and their underwear is more interesting.)

Desperate for Duran anecdotes, one UK newspaper threatened to send five reporters anywhere in the world to monitor the band's every move unless they consented to an inter-



view. Duran simply sells papers.

In the art deco bar of the Paris Plaza, we are sipping Bloody Marys, just Nick and I. There don't appear to be any hacks under the tablecloth. Just in case, we discuss the last thing they would want to hear about—Nick Rhodes' music.

"The album with Simon was a real experiment. We had been talking about doing something a little more abstract for months. It is a very different approach with only two of us writing—when there are five of us, we could work things out with a rhythm first and build things up, whereas Simon and I just sat down and wrote songs. It was quite exciting, fitting all the musicians together. You never quite knew what was going to happen. The first day, I was in the control room and I pushed the faders up slowly to hear them all. It was such a shock.

"Our percussionist Van Tieghem is so funny. He had this big sack full of saucepans with him. One day he produced this weird buzzing noise—it turned out to be a dildo. It's inconceivable, what this guy plays.

"It's so different from anything we have done before, as I think it should have been. All the tracks are very diverse. I am confident that it is good, but I wonder how people will receive it.

"It would have been very destructive to split up and just do the same things as Duran—that's why Andy and John went for a hard, heavier approach, and we went avant-garde. Both projects were worked in a very short time. I would not want them to carry on any longer. When you are one of the five of us, you know that what we have together is the best thing. This gives you a chance to realize it even more. Not that I would put down anything that I have done. I have worked with really great musicians, but they think so differently from the way we think. We all know exactly how each other thinks in Duran. As soon as I play some chords it's obvious to John what he should be playing. The experimentation with this project has been very inspiring. I have learnt a lot."

Perhaps the most interesting dichotomy within Nick Rhodes is his belief in the power of naïveté and the sophistication of his intellectual quest. He believes it is vital to think young, in order to make music that is vibrant and new and powerful. Thinking old destroys that power.

He is proud of his untrained musicianship. "Musically, Andy is a pole opposite to me. He is very technical and knows every classical chord progression. He knows when things should fit, whereas I don't. I picked up a synthesizer when I was 16 and I couldn't play a thing; I used to put stickers on the notes so that I knew what they were—white ones, with a black marker pen. I have a different approach and it is a big advantage. If I am trying to get something right, maybe to find a final chord, Andy will know exactly what that chord is and what I am getting at. And when Andy does something straightforward, I can help him by suggesting, 'Why not put this chord in?' It may not fit, but it sounds great. The wonderful theory that opposite poles attract works within the

band.

"We are all very separate and all very close. No one really knows the internal politics of Duran. We are all so individual in our thinking, you would never believe we were from the same band—yet we know each other so well.

How long will these facets work to keep Duran Duran together? The reply is the old standard. "Duran Duran will last for as long as all five of us want it to... and for as long as we are happy with the things we are doing artistically. If we ever got to the stage where we were making albums that all sounded the same as each other, I'd like to stop.

"I haven't a clue what the next Duran Duran album is going to sound like. But it will be so exciting to bring together what each tangent has learnt. Fame creates pressures, and all of Duran work best under pressure. It is a constant to have to prove ourselves."

Rhodes became a musician because it provided a central point from which to develop creative outlets. Other projects have included producing Kajagoogoo and a book of outlandishly awful Polaroids. He also draws and paints occasionally, but says he is not very good.

"If you are an artist, you don't make records, but if you are in a band, there is nothing to stop you making videos or becoming involved in production. I don't see myself as a musician; 'musician,' on its own, is a narrow field. Video has been of prime importance to us because it was new when we were. We wanted to pioneer it as an art form. As soon as we have finished a song, it has to be put into a visual perspective—things aren't flat, people don't just have radios anymore."

Wandering through the hotel lobby, we bump into Rhodes' statuesque new wife, Julie Ann.

One wonders if the pressure of his work has had any effect on the couple's year-old marriage. "It calls for a lot of understanding," he admits. "Fortunately, my wife knows where I am coming from and why I have to do what I am doing. I wouldn't like to be in that position myself—of being close to us while we are working. We work an incredible amount of hours. I am not a selfish person. I give a lot to the band and to my wife. Yes, I have lots of ambition, but it is good to have sex drive as well. It's a powerful thing. People say it interferes with work, but I think it helps. There are bound to be points in time where the two conflict, but they are usually resolved by reaching greater peaks in both fields.

"I feel possessive about her," he continues, "but I don't have to follow her everywhere. I always want her to feel well and comfortable and happy. We spend a lot of time apart and that makes the relationship better. Above all, I require understanding. I am a Gemini, so I have erratic changes of moods. It is good to have somebody to support you outside of a band situation. It's a real help to bring back something you have been working on in the studio and get a comment—whether the comment is right or not, it doesn't matter. It's just the fact that there is somebody who cares."



Julie Brown: Homecoming Queen With a Bullet!

Interview by Glenn O'Brien
Photography by Ed Colver

Julie Brown sings very funny songs. Like "The Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun." Like "I Want a Man Who's Big and Stupid." If Woody Allen wrote for the Go-Go's, they might do songs like "Cause I'm a Blonde."

Her album, *Goddess in Progress*, on Rhino Records, is rocketing up the independent-label charts, and maybe if it hits the top it will break onto the pop charts. It should be there; her songs are totally fab pop music—catchy, cute, fun, danceable. But she is on Rhino Records. And she's on Rhino because she's so funny. Funny makes major labels act funny and think funny.

But there's no stopping Julie Brown. Soon, she will be a great star. She is already the funniest rock star on record and she sings great, too.

SPIN: Is Julie Brown your real name?

JULIE: Yeah. Julie Ann Brown. And I really grew up in the Valley. I really was a homecoming princess, but not the queen. Just a princess.

SPIN: Why weren't you the queen?

JULIE: I think the queen totally manipulated people to get the title. Not to be vicious or anything, but she wasn't as popular as she should have been to get that title.

SPIN: What's she doing now?

JULIE: Oh, I have no idea. Probably married and living in the Valley. Have you seen my video of "Homecoming Queen?"

SPIN: No. I can't get MTV. I've been trying for years.

JULIE: It's not on MTV. That's the only thing I'm not on. They thought it was too violent. It's really absurd. It's as violent as a Road Runner cartoon. The video is

great. It's been on most of the other video shows and it's in a lot of the clubs across the country.

SPIN: So how did these songs come about?

JULIE: I was doing stand-up comedy before we made the record. It was about the time that I was about to stop doing stand-up. I said, "This really bugs me—I've got to do something else, 'cause I want to perform." And I started getting ideas for these songs. It was at about this time that I met Terence McNally, whom I am now married to, and I said, "I want to do these songs." And he said, "Well, why don't I produce them?"

SPIN: Is he famous?

JULIE: There is a playwright named Terence McNally. This Terence is an actor. He works a lot as an actor. He wants to be a producer. It just seemed like a good idea. I was real excited. We recorded the first two songs, "The Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun" and "I Want a Man Who's Big and Stupid," as a single, and when that started becoming popular I realized I'd like to start playing with a band.

SPIN: He produced the record?

JULIE: We hired a music producer and we produced it with him. Terence put the whole thing together. And it's really taken over our lives now. We do this 12 hours a day, every day. It's really a lot of work. I had no idea how much work it would be to play with a band. It's like, amazing. We just did our taxes, too, and when I saw how much money we invested in this record project I could not believe it. I looked around the house and said, "Okay, what do we have to show for this?" We have a synthesizer and an amplifier and some weird costumes.

SPIN: How long did you do stand-up?

JULIE: I was part of a comedy team in San Francisco for two years, then I came to LA and did solo stand-up for about three years.

SPIN: Were you ever on TV?

JULIE: I was on "Evening at the Improv"

for two years. I was a regular. I really like what I'm doing now because I do jokes between my songs. But it's my act; it's not like anyone else's act. It's not like when all these stand-ups are playing together, being intense with each other.

SPIN: Audiences are more respectful if music is involved. Either that, or it's hard to heckle a guitar.

JULIE: Exactly; you're louder than they are. Music has a lot more energy than talking. That's what always frustrated me about comedy. I liked working in a team and doing sketches—that was more theatrical. But stand-up is just you, by yourself, on a stage. It's weird, to me.

SPIN: There's an old thing about how comedians are all unhappy people down deep. What do you think?

JULIE: It could be true. I would not call myself unhappy. I'd call myself happy. I'm sincerely working on being happy. I think I'm a serious person, more serious than I'd like to be. But I try to look at things . . . I try to perceive the world positively. I don't think it gets you very far to be negative. That was one of the hard things about being a comedian and hanging out with comedians—how negative they were. A lot of times in comedy clubs, the humor that comes off the stage is very negative. I hated that. It's not interesting to me, how stupid everything is. I like a more interesting point of view than, "the world is stupid." My brother Mark is pretty funny. He's a carpenter.

SPIN: You have a song "Cause I'm a Blonde." Are you now or have you ever been a blonde?

JULIE: No, I'm a brunette who dyes her hair red. I put on a big tacky blonde wig when I perform that song.

SPIN: Why did you go redhead?

JULIE: I felt boring as a brunette. Not boring; that's not the right word. I just like to feel more intense-looking. I like it better now. But when my roots start growing in, I start changing personality.

SPIN: Do you have any groupies?

JULIE: Yeah!

SPIN: I imagine you've had both kinds. What's the difference between comedy groupies and music groupies?

JULIE: They're radically different. When you do music and have songs on the radio, especially the kind of material I do, it creates a kind of cult thing and you attract cult-type people. They learn all the lyrics, they come to all the shows. I think it's great, that's it's moved people that much.

SPIN: What are you doing now?

JULIE: I'm writing a screenplay. I sold a movie to a major studio and I get to star in this movie.

SPIN: What's the movie about?

JULIE: I'm not supposed to talk about it yet; I'm not sure what I can say. It's based on one of my songs. I just can't tell you which one.

SPIN: Do you want to be a movie star?

JULIE: Uh-huh. I really want to be a movie star.

SPIN: Who would you like to costar with?

JULIE: David Lee Roth, for one. I love

continued on page 64



They were once musical gods. Then jealousy and success shattered the band. Now the Wailers are reunited on an eerie new—and as yet unreleased—album of brilliant wailing. Plus: Jason and the Scorchers, The Blasters, Touré Kunda, Santana, Van Morrison, Accept, and Suicide Love Songs.

SPINS

Edited by Rudy Langlais

Platter du Jour

Bob Marley, Bunny Wailer, Peter Tosh, et. al.

Wailers Reunion
(No label)

Back in 1979, before Bob Marley's terminal illness became apparent, I ran into Peter Tosh, his former partner in the original Wailers, in Los Angeles. Their estrangement was no secret. During the final two years of Marley's life, they never even spoke. Marley had become a superstar on his own, something that always seemed to elude Tosh. And yet, Tosh told me that "[it] is my hope and aspiration" that he and Bob and Bunny Wailer could reunite somehow. "I'm thinking of writing a song that the three of us can sing. The title would be 'Here We Are Together Again.'"

Shortly after Tosh told me this, Marley made his final tour of the West Coast, and I asked him if he thought he could ever sing such a song. After a long pause he said: "Well, sure . . . as long as we a-deal with the same thing. It was different, different road, [we weren't]

on the same road." He was speaking of the trio's breakup.

When Bob "transcended" in May of 1981, internal quarrels boiled to the surface of the steamy cauldron of Jamaican musical politics. Bunny and Peter were rumored to have approached Marley's Wailers band for a reunion project, only to be rudely rebuffed. Next, word circulated that two other early Wailers—Vision and Junior Brathwaite—had been summoned to Kingston to participate in an "Original Wailers" project. Vision, Rita Marley's cousin, had replaced Bob Marley as lead singer in the group when Bob went to Delaware in 1966 and worked on the night shift of a Chrysler plant to earn money to start his own record label. He had since toured America with the California-based reggae band, the Rastafarians, and more prominently with Peter Tosh's band. Brathwaite had emigrated to Chicago in the mid '60s, a couple of years after the Wailers started. People in those days often claimed that Junior had the best voice in the group, and it was only after he left that Bob and the others got to sing more leads. He's kind of the Pete Best of reggae.

Late in 1983, Bunny Wailer confirmed to me that a reformed Wailers was working in the studios. "Right now," explained Bunny proudly, "Vision is a bass man, he's also a guitarist, he's also a drummer. He's a lot of things, that man 'Dream' [another nickname] there; now

he's developed totally. And Junior Brathwaite is a keyboard specialist. All these years he's been playing keyboards in America—and we are ready!"

A year and a half went by. I heard nothing until early March, when I heard a demo tape of the *Wailers Reunion* album. As of now they have no distribution deal, but somebody's going to make a bundle on it.

It is almost everything a Wailers fanatic could hope for, with a healthy share of surprises, and the answers to a whole lot of what-ifs. What if Bob and Bunny and Peter had stayed together to record some more? What if Junior and Vision returned to the group, and laid new tracks with Bob? What if Bob sang harmonies for Bunny's solo inspirations? What if Sly and Robbie could add their genius to the Wailers' passion? All these seemingly unsolvable conundrums, and more, are answered with delight on *Reunion*, from the opening and most successful track, the instant-legend "Together Again." Yes, the song is a reality now, and it has everything one could wish for, from solo lines by Bunny, Peter, Vision and Junior, to hand-slappin' and grin-inducing vocal twists, and harmonies such as the angels sing. After all, Tosh maintains, "Reggae is the music dem played in de Bible." "It's been a long time comin'," announces Bunny right at the top of "Together Again," but "We'll be workin' together again/We'll be wailin' till all the people are freed." Midway, Tosh's distinctive stepping-razor of



Kate Simon

a voice takes the lead, humbly asserting that they are once more "Moving on in unity/Doing the best we can." If the album contained only this one track, it would still be seminal.

As the next cut begins, the familiar chords of "I'm Still Waiting," one of the Wailers' earliest successes, segues into—could it be?—the unmistakable voice of Bob himself! In a chilling appearance, the man who left us four years ago chides us that, "I'm still waiting." And indeed he is, from beyond the pale. Then, halfway through, the voice seems different—maybe now it's Junior, Bob's soundalike. I don't know whether to hope the album will have explanatory and detailed liner notes, or that it will remain a mystery so that we can guess who's singing what. "Nice Time," another reprise, is next, Bunny doing the early lead, then Peter taking a turn, each lacing into the other's grooves to tie it all together at the end.

"Hammer" follows a song that appears as a Tosh seven-inch solo single, and as a track on the Danny Sims/Johnny Nash demo sessions from 1968-1972. This is a superior version, with Bunny and Peter duetting melodiously. Next is an exciting trio of new discoveries: "Dutch Pot," has perhaps the catchiest rhythm on the record, rolling along like a Sam Cooke calypso-shuffle, circa 1963. A nuff-nuff sweet tune, dis one. "Put down your pomps and pride and come dub it," implores Bunny, and an ethereal chorus, sounding different from any other track or time, answers in a scintillating, insinuating "rub it, rub it, oo-oo." I'd like a whole LP based on the sound of the group on this track.

Bob leaps to the front again, sounding hollow compared to the others' mix, coming from perhaps 1972 to introduce a deliciously didactic ditty called "Music Lesson." His voice is taunting and is tinged with a loose Buddy Holly-esque curve on some of his vowels: "Teach them about Marco Polo/... Christopher Columbus/How these wicked men rob cheat kill the poor/... Music got to teach them one lesson." Now Bunny comes swoop-

ing across to top Bob's vocal, then Peter adds his verse, and Bob once more, until the original trio are all here again, creating something brand new, yearned for, almost too good to believe, yet edged with the sad realization of all the untapped potential gone with Bob's passing at a scant 36.

Bunny's "Rescue Me" is an Armageddon song that urges: "Put not your trust in horses and chariots/But in the Most High," and cautions against the youth who take up the gun or, frighteningly, "atomic weapons!" The song has a restrained and tasteful underlining chorus, and is notable for Bunny's scating Joe Higgs-like verse, complete with cocks crowing in the background. This is what they mean by "yard" music.

Another pair of remakes completes the package. "How Many Times" opens with Bob, then adds a distinctly female voice that almost certainly is Rita's, in an original vocal performance that has new backing tracks appended. This version is very different from the released version on the Sims' LP *Chances Are*, and its vocal probably dates back as far. By the end, Bunny has assumed the lead.

"It Hurts to Be Alone" is an early Coxsome track from the '60s, redone at some later time, with a lead voice that sounds eerily like the young Bob, but might not be him after all. This reading has a timeless reggae feel, with nice synthesizer propulsion that takes us undramatically to the conclusion of the collection.

How to judge it properly? As a collection of artifacts? Hardly; many are brand new, like the title track. As a hodgepodge? No way—not with the love and authenticity that has evidently been lavished on the project. In a world of vicious vinyl vampires, whose plastic waste clutters the bins with substandard material, this truly original Wailers collection is the answer to our prayers, and a never-sated fan's fever-dream come true. If some major label doesn't sign the rights to this gem, there is no justice left in the world.

—Roger Steffens

The tensions between the Wailers' charismatic superstar, Bob Marley, (left) and Peter Tosh, who was desperate to become a star but could never emerge from Marley's shadow, helped lead to the band's breakup. For years afterwards, the two never spoke. Marley formed his own band (seen below during a soundcheck in Göteborg, Sweden: (L to R) Aston Barrett, Carlton Barrett, Marley and Junior Marvin).



Kate Simon



Jason and the Scorchers
Lost and Found
EMI-America

One good side of the patriotism epidemic currently sweeping this country is the renewed interest in purely American music. Post-punk bands, left stranded after the punk explosion fizzled, are donning flannel shirts, denouncing Anglophilia, and rallying under the banner of tradition-drenched rock 'n' roll. Small compensation for Ronald Reagan and Mary Lou Retton, but as an alternative to Duran Duran and the Thompson Twins, it goes a long way.

In this movement toward purer roots, Jason and the Scorchers are unashamed bastards. These cowpunks, remaining true to neither side of their inspirational lineage, play up the mutant aspect of their synthesis. Full of country corn and punk disrespect, they raise a wild fuss that spoofs both sides while drawing their energy from each, like a Nashville incarnation of the New York Dolls. On *Lost and Found*, the triumphant follow-up to their *Fervor* EP, Jason Ringenberg, a prematurely balding boy just off an Illinois hog farm, and three punk rockers from Country Music City, offer hell-bent rockers and slightly formal ballads. This band is limp on the slow stuff, but its grungy metal-billy burns the barn down.

The Scorchers cut their eyeteeth in a heavy-metal cover band, and though they've curbed some of their self-indulgent excesses, they still go in for crude sonic overkill. With reckless glee they trash country standards like "Lost Highway" and "I Really Don't Want to Know." They've figured out that the only way to present their clichés—guitar feedback, stock lyrics, Jason's yee-haw yelps—is right out front, overlapping, contradicting and deflating each other. And it works. The countryish tunes keep the churning noise bouncy, and the noise in turn gives the tunes an amphetamine rush. There's an intelligence behind this music, but I'll be damned if I can put my finger on it. If you ask me, that's what makes these ersatz cowpunks so good.

I think Jason and the Scorchers really do love country music—after all, the Dolls certainly loved AM pop. They have fun within its terms, not at its expense. This is hearty buffoonery, not camp. When the Scorchers scorch, it doesn't matter that they're a one-joke band. And when they don't... well, the joke is a pretty good one.

—John Leland



Santana
Beyond Appearances
Columbia

Can anyone deny that Carlos Santana is one of rock's major and lasting figures? He's been pumping it out so long, and without the attendant glitter others find necessary, that there's a tendency to take the dude for granted. Yet his guitar style has evolved into one of the most distinctive voices ever heard on rock's lead instrument—a crystalline, soaring, often stinging, liquid, instantly identifiable sound. Santana's blend of salsa, space jazz, blues and rock has never been quite duplicated, making his identity truly unique. Of all the figures who came up in the '60s era (sometimes referred to by this post-new wave generation—often righteously—as "dinosaur rock"), off the top of my head, only Santana and Jagger come readily to mind as consistently producing vital work. And, I submit, next to Prince, Santana's two-hour live show is the strongest in rock.

With all that, it's become disappointing to hear Carlos on disc, at least on most of the albums since 1978's *Inner Secrets*. Not that the latest, *Beyond Appearances*, is bad; quite the contrary. This is the most consistently cooking album Santana has released in seven years. But it still disappoints because you know the band is capable of so much more. Especially after they blow you away live.

What seems to have been Carlos's downfall during this seven-year stretch is his attempt to balance his rock audience with his Latin/jazz audience. The resulting hybrids have just not had the fire of his early work, or the depth of his "middle" period. That's because the balancing act has not been viewed from a musical so much as a commercial consideration; worse, Carlos sees his rock audience in AOR terms, and that is dinosaur city.

When Carlos was a kid, he attracted fans from rock because of the element of danger in his music, of the jungle and voodoo. It was precisely because he didn't sound like scores of others that people came to listen, dance, and be refreshed. Those fans stayed and newer ones joined to get away from formula rock, from AOR safety. No, from Santana you want the kind of rush that you know Journey, REO Speedwagon, Foreigner and the like just can't provide. See Carlos live; he delivers. But hear Carlos on disc; it's too safe. Pull out *Abraxas* and listen again to side one.

Lots of folks got turned off when the

recharged promise of *Amigos* (in 1976) and *Festival* (in 1977) was followed by a lame string of plastic: *Inner Secrets*, *Marathon*, *Zebop!*, and *Shango*. The last LP, 1983's *Havana Moon*, was a vast improvement: gut vocalist Greg Walker was back; the title track caught the fun of jams like "Evil Ways;" "They All Went to Mexico," with Willie Nelson, spoke volumes about Carlos's Tex-Mex roots (and worked a helluva lot better than Willie 'n' Julio); and the playing was tight. The new album picks up where *Havana Moon* left off, though no track here jumps like "Moon," or soars like "Ecuador/Tales of Kilimanjaro."

The feel of "Kilimanjaro," by the way, is the space-jazz facet of Santana's persona that was captured so well on the 1975 three-disc Japanese import *Lotus*, a "must" in any collection (when will CBS release it domestically?). True to his craft, Carlos struck a deal with CBS which allows him, in this seven-year period, the freedom to record "non-commercial" material. Released as "Devadip Carlos Santana," these two LPs—*Oneness* (1979) and *The Swing of Delight* (1980)—were proof of how lightweight other albums of that era were.

On *Beyond Appearances*, my man edges closer to the synthesis of rock, inner space and jungle that only he seems capable of pulling off. But those AOR tendencies keep cutting the legs out from under him. Yo, Chuck! Post-new wave means bands are working more with funk inna rock than ever before, and the kids are eating it up. Later for "adult con-tempo" formulas!

By now you've heard the single "Say It Again," which is typical of the (slightly) better AOR-crosses here, such as "Breaking Out." Thank Chango and all the other spirits for Greg Walker to add some punch on lead vocals, because co-lead Alex Ligertwood is just too lightweight, an instant reminder of AOR at its worst. Though double-tracked and intro'd by synths, Walker pulls off a great Phil Collins on

"How Long;" the band helps him a lot on Curtis Mayfield's "I'm the One Who Loves You."

Santana still has that mean rhythm section, anchored by percussionists Armando Peraza, Orestes Vilato, and Raul Rekow—collectively, his secret weapon. And now he's added Alphonso Johnson on bass, and David Sancious on guitar and keyboards, for more sock, which they show off on "Brotherhood/Spirit" and "Who Loves You."

All 'n' all, not a bad—and often, good—LP. But next time, 'los, let's really throw down—Huh?

—Pablo Guzmán

Album Artwork Not Designed at Press Time

New Order Low Life Factory

"I find the popularity thing a bit hard to relate to."—New Order's Peter Hook.

This kind of statement might seem gratuitous or vain coming out of the mouths of most pop musicians. But not from a member of New Order, a group forever cast in the shadow of its previous incarnation as a band called Joy Division. When Joy Division's lead singer Ian Curtis punctuated a year of chillingly morbid and provocative musical/philosophical

statements by hanging himself in early 1980, he created a quasi-religious cult.

Joy Division fans were not waiting for Ian Curtis's resurrection, though—they were spellbound by the fact that the hopelessness and despair in the band's songs were real, so real that the lead singer killed himself on the eve of the band's first American tour rather than face stardom.

Fans weren't the only ones impressed by the depth of Ian Curtis's angst. The remaining members of Joy Division—guitarist Bernard Sumner, bassist Peter Hook and drummer Stephen Morris—set about arranging for the release of every scrap of material they'd recorded with Curtis, and (with the addition of Morris's girlfriend, Gillian Gilbert, on keyboards) began carrying those ideas forward into the '80s as New Order.

New Order has recorded sporadically over the past few years, while Joy Division retrospectives and bootlegs continue to appear. Despite its understated presence, New Order became a major influence on dance-oriented Brits like Duran Duran. For a group that always disavowed the music industry and exploitation, New Order always had a couple of decidedly commercial ideas.

Low Life, the latest New Order LP, is the most commercial record the band has made. Though they've stuck with Factory Records, the independent label that most New Order and Joy Division product has filtered through, the band has gotten away from the quirkiness and originality of its sound on recent recordings.

While the British press has always mistakenly referred to the "funk" in New Order's electronic rhythms, the thinness and lack of swing in the sound makes it far less likely dance fodder for American audiences. Remix master Arthur Baker was brought in to work with the group and ended up giving New Order a much tougher rhythmic base, but took away some of its personality.

Low Life, then, is a relatively slick, state-of-the-art dance package, distinguished

by several excellent songs, particularly "Love Vigilantes," with its Beatlesque "Love Me Do" harmonica riff and ironic dead-soldier-memoirs lyric, and "Face Up," a Lou Reed-inspired hymn to individuality. Fans of the dense, dank side of New Order will find no comfort outside of the mordant instrumental "Elegia," but a new generation of fans may well take to Sumner's spectacular guitar playing throughout the record. With Curtis dead for five years now, it's about time New Order stopped rehashing the themes and feelings of their days of despair and forged into new territory.

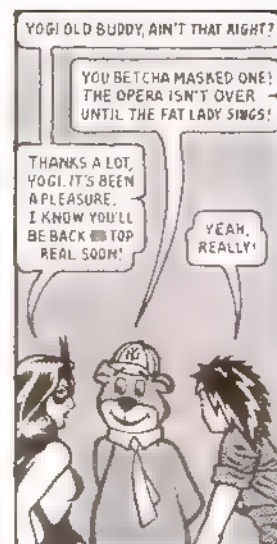
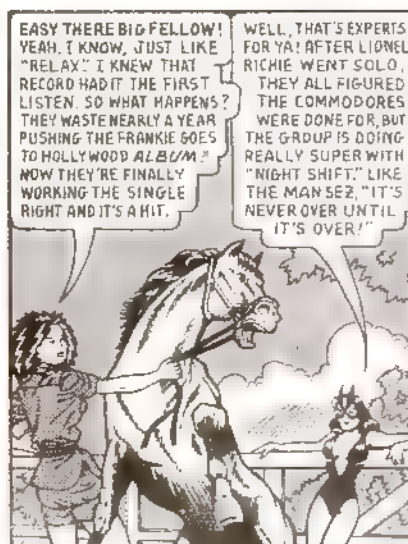
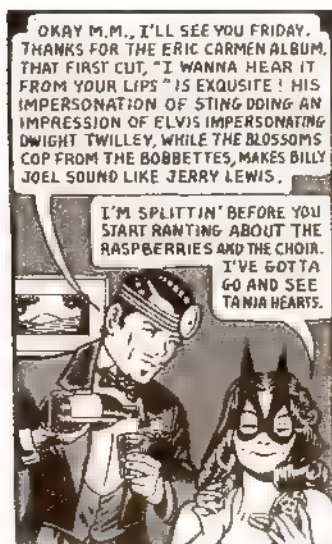
—John Swenson



Touré Kunda Amadou Tilo Celluloid

The great center for African music today is not Africa, but Paris, where dozens of émigrés are fusing their idiosyncratic styles with Western pop and jazz. Among the most successful are three brothers from Senegal called Touré Kunda. Translated, the name means "family of elephants." They moved their herd to Paris in 1978, when there were four of them, and have grown so popular that they now play stadiums and have their live LP on

Tales From The Bogosphere /By the Mad Peck, Patty Andrews & Big Al Pavlow



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France's Top 20 chart.

The dark side of their story involves the death of one of the brothers, Amadou, under odd circumstances in Paris two years ago. The group began in Paris in 1975, when eldest brother Ismail arrived as a "scout." An intellectual, he represented the cerebral side of Touré Kunda's music, and found fertile ground to sow its roots. Arriving next was Sixu, the traditionalist, a griot, whose withdrawn personality masked his deeply intuitive nature. By 1979, Amadou had joined the rest of his "elephant family," the elephant symbolizing Africa's strength and wisdom.

On January 25, 1983, the group was playing a gig in a Parisian nightclub called the Chapel des Lombards, when Amadou, tired and overworked, a condition that had caused his brothers to caution him repeatedly to slow down, began to experience difficulty breathing in the stuffy club's close quarters. He went out to get some air and never came back.

The brothers found him outside, comatose and barely alive. An ambulance took an abnormally long time to arrive. As the attendants placed his body on a stretcher, Amadou muttered his final words: "Go back and play; don't stop. Whatever happens, you must continue."

He was buried in Senegal without an autopsy, which helped spread rumors that some kind of foul play, perhaps involving the French police, had been involved. However, the band says it was a combination of chronic asthma and a heart attack that brought on Amadou's untimely death at 32.

Another brother, Ousmane, quit his physical-education job to join the group. Upbeat and friendly, he seems the most outgoing of the group, and has been part of its most recent successes, including a triumphant tour of Africa.

This album is dedicated to their dead brother. The title means "Sun of Amadou," a tribute to the creative light his energy shed on the band while he was alive.

The title track opens the new record with a sad, roots complexity of sax and thumb piano, under a male chorus that rapid-chants harmoniously. It's a shorter version of the one on *Casamance au Clair de Lune* (another recent Celluloid release), which is an all-acoustic set. The longer rendering of the song features haunting sitar passages that underline the mournfulness of the composition more effectively than this short interpretation.

Casamance, Touré Kunda's home region in Senegal, is celebrated in the next track. The lead vocal has a slight Arabic inflection, while bells and bongos meld nicely into horn riffs and a chorus glides lightly in an evocation of tropical steaminess. "Courier" darts through a thicket of Afro-rock sounds, telling the story of an African postman who completes his rounds by boat on the Casamance River. "Utamada" means "take a good example," that is, look at what your parents, or others you admire, are doing and follow their lead. It sounds like War meets the Ramayana monkey chant at a Tito Puente picnic.

Latin influences are also apparent in "Labrador," a swaggering tale of fishermen and farmers, with a rippling piano

solo. Touré Kunda's members take pride in being able to sing in seven languages. Their manager Olivier Holland has said, "The brothers' idea was to join everything they had learned in Africa to the other musics around the world." Indeed, one can hear shades of UB40's reggae sax, crossed with Cuban vocals and a poppy lead guitar in "Lemene Kuru" ("Don't cry my child"). "E'mbalma" means "I speak to you," and begins with a vocal chorus that is repeated throughout, over a relentless percussive underpinning. "Salya" speaks of a griot, one of those men who is a living repository of the history of his people. It, too, has a tribal opening that builds rapidly to a mid-tempo riff with smooth chorus, almost like Sergio Mendes. A multi-instrument conversation follows, propelled by bongos twisting into rock again.

Touré Kunda seems its strongest when it goes out on the limb grounded in its roots, and weakest when it allows Western pop to suffuse its Africanity. This is obvious in the final track—a fragment, really—called "500 F." (for 500 francs, the average donation one would give a griot for his tales). It's a propulsive blend of whistles, talking drums and male chorus that recalls South African Zulu a cappella choirs. It stands out for its frankness and unadorned strength.

Touré Kunda completed a U.S. tour of the East and Midwest in April. At press time, they planned to bring with them all 10 members, including four Frenchmen and other musicians from Antigua, Cameroun and the Ivory Coast. Their goal is to break down the barriers of international music, and synthesize its best elements. This excursion is a good place to enter into their particular point of view, a fine place for the casually curious to encounter the World Beat of the '80s.

—Roger Steffens



Arto Lindsay/Ambitious Lovers
Envy
Editions EG

This ear-opening new album from Arto Lindsay and the Ambitious Lovers is cause for celebration. Celebration not just because it's the most generous and appealing work Lindsay has ever done, but also because this progenitor of the willfully subcultist New York no-wave movement has found a way to articulate his challenging ideas to a broader rock audience. Through sheer clarity of vision, he brings his formerly anti-pop trademarks—de-



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mented, chicken-scratch guitar, fragmented lyrics, idiosyncratic compositions, choppy rhythms—intact into a contemporary pop format flavored with Brazilian seasonings. With a solid background of long-hair experimentation behind him, Lindsay's most daring move to date is this quantum leap from deep left field (almost) into rock's mainstream.

Lindsay was the guiding intelligence behind DNA, the abrasive, reductionist rhythm trio whose fragmentary experiments in rock deconstruction were either a startlingly brilliant distillation of punk's primal energy, or the most execrable dogshit ever to reverberate in New York's most avant clubs.

DNA became spiritual godfather to the semipopular no-wave sound. Working by instinct rather than theory, the undaunted trio—along with Theoretical Girls, Lydia Lunch, Mars, and a host of other scruffy noisemakers—helped shatter the barriers between high and low musical culture. Their clipped, asymmetrical blurts suited their name: Densely encoded in Lindsay's tunelessly percussive guitar and garbled yelps, Ikui Mori's broken tribal rhythms, and either Robin Crutchfield's blunt keyboards or (later) Tim Wright's more subtle bass, were the raw connections between 20th-century primitivist classical music and its crude younger sibling, rock 'n' roll.

When DNA decomposed in 1981 (with a nonpareil rendition of Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love"), Lindsay continued his scratch 'n' sniff guitar-playing in more jazzy grooves alongside John Lurie in the

Lounge Lizards and Golden Palominos. By this time, the hip hop scene had busted out, introducing a less encumbered way of reducing everything to rhythm. So it comes as no surprise that Lindsay brought a more groove-conscious orientation to his solo career. And given his determined iconoclasm, it's no surprise that *Envy* is all over the place, shifting from lilting Brazilian rhythms to controlled dissonance to beat-box. It's no surprise that the record is heavily Brazilian; Lindsay was raised in a Brazilian monastery. But that it should be all of these things in such a warm and accessible way—well, what's going on here?

The catalyst is the tunes. Lindsay turned most of the writing duties over to the Pan-American Ambitious Lovers. Like Talking Heads when they first immersed themselves in a big band, Lindsay seems like an art entity suddenly liberated from a conceptual bind, and freed to direct his jittery nervous energy outward rather than inward. Within the more sophisticated folkloric tropical rhythms, his ideas flow freely without getting in their own way. And while DNA used to tear into an amphetamine rush, the explosiveness on *Envy* comes from the spaces between the precisely played notes. Everyone plays percussively, and everyone underplays.

Which makes the music, however complex rhythmically, good to dance to. The disarming "Let's Be Adult" glides through a tricky rhythmic twist with a beat so catchy it belongs on the radio next to Madonna. "Cross Your Legs" is portentously restrained funk that doesn't

let the horses loose until the fade. Elsewhere, there are a couple of jarring fragments, some samba, a pair of pretty Brazilian ballads, and the album's grand synthesis, "Locus Coruleus," in which funk and noise battle it out, and Lindsay fires off a piercing, strident guitar solo.

Like Laurie Anderson's *Mister Heartbreak*, this is international crossover music in the most expansive and stimulating sense.

—John Leland



The Blasters Hard Line Slash

Hard Line, the Blasters' third album, is a relaxed but scattered groove. A truly enjoyable studio album recorded in Nashville and Los Angeles, it reflects a wide range of musical roots, especially gospel and blues. With their number pared again to a quintet and their sound shorn of R&B shadings, the boys from Downey, California, balance their allegiance to purist roots with commercial sensibility.

The opening "Trouble Bound," with "bop, bop" choruses courtesy of the Jordanaires (Elvis' former backup group), displays the band's skill at revitalizing traditional themes. "You Ain't Nothin' But Fine" is flavored with cantina accordion by David Hidalgo of Los Lobos. "Samson and Delilah," a rocking, traditional gospel tune, showcases vocalist Phil Alvin and the rigidly arranged Jubilee Train Singers. The square-dance string arrangements of "Little Honey," featuring guest musicians Richard Greene on fiddle and David Hidalgo on mandolin, perfectly evoke the heated torpor of a combelt country lament.

Dave Alvin's masterpiece is "Dark Night." His lyrics paint a timeless portrait of senseless bloodshed that could equally apply to the Hatfield-McCoy feud or barrio turf battles. The opening line, "Hot air hangs like a dead man," and the cut's twangy bayou guitar licks chill to the marrow.

It is easy to find minor faults with this commercially oriented album. Certainly the only conceivable reason for tackling John Cougar Mellencamp's "Colored Lights"—on which John wrote, produced, and played acoustic guitar—is to score a coattails hit. Let's hope it happens. Listen to this album. The Blasters are a great band and should produce many great albums for years to come.

—Don Snowden



Accept Metal Heart Portrait

Heavy metal, arguably the most popular sub-genre in rock 'n' roll history, has reached a crisis point. With the exception of one or two bands, every outfit that contributed to the unprecedented groundswell of interest in this style during the '80s has hit times so dire that its future is in doubt.

Def Leppard, voted the most popular band in America in '84, was already far overdue on its next album when drummer Rick Allen lost his right arm in a car accident, throwing that group's future into limbo.

Ozzy Osbourne, the Frank Sinatra of grossout, turned in his booze, cocaine and headless bats for a stint in the Betty Ford clinic, which says something about his commitment to mayhem. Judas Priest proved a bitter disappointment to CBS when its last album turned out to be the HM flop of '84. Ratt sunk without a trace after its initial rush to glory, and the group is now deeply embroiled in contract hassles that are delaying its next album.

In this climate, MTV announced that it was drastically reducing the amount of heavy-metal video clips in its rotation, a decided blow to the industry stranglehold HM has enjoyed through the '80s. MTV airplay has been tied directly and consistently to increased LP sales, so it seems likely that a drop-off in HM clips will result in a dip in album sales.

This is obviously going to make a band like Accept wilt a little in its leathers. Poised to become this year's Scorpions, the band (like so many other freeze-dried HM acts) looks more like Spinal Tap. *Metal Heart* reeks of studied moves.

The squalling guitars and lockstep beat on *Metal Heart* are characteristic Euro-metal trademarks—like Scorpions, Accept represents the pride of industrial Germany. But while the Scorpions deserve some credit for muddling through the decade-plus of mediocrity, nurturing a rock 'n' roll dream before history finally caught up with them, Accept is just another commodity.

Who are these guys kidding? While it's hard not to snicker at the Scorpions' songwriting—an earnest mangle of English—there's nothing funny about Germans singing a song called "Wrong Is Right," just as there's nothing funny about the stupid Judas Priest cop "Screaming for a Love Bite," or the gratuitous S&M of "Dogs on Leads." "Too High to Get It Right" might be wishful thinking, but "Bound to Fail" is closer to the truth.

Which leads to an inevitable conclusion about HM's swift rise and fall. The stuff is rock 'n' roll's version of vaudeville, with stock screams and guitar riffs instead of "Take my wife, please" as the shtick. Just as in vaudeville, HM bands furiously steal material from each other and live by the "show must go on" creed. It's a music almost entirely for live performance. So why would anybody in their right mind want to buy this record?

—John Swenson



Various Artists Teenage Tragedy Rhino

"If I don't get what I want, I'll kill myself! I'll just kill myself!" It's been a teen cry ever since "teen" was defined. Teenage suicide goes at least as far back as Romeo and Juliet, and has been celebrated and romanticized in romance comics, B-movies, and some of the more absurdist singles in the history of rock 'n' roll. Too fast to live, too young to die. All it took was a few minutes of emotional anguish, and the boy would drive his car/motorcycle into an oncoming semitrailer, or the girl drown herself.

Although the teen-death record has long been enshrined in the annals of rock trivia, no one has ever had the gall to put together a compilation album of the genre. The consistently adventurous Rhino Records has now boldly gone where no man has, etc. *Teenage Tragedy* presents 10 of what are described on the cover as "the bossest splatter platters ever recorded."

Things start off mildly enough. Jody Reynolds' baby gets in a snit and splashes into the ocean, bent on a watery grave. "That'll show him!" Ol' Jody is on the case, though, and he drags her out in the nick of time. Mark Dining isn't so lucky on "Teen Angel;" his baby is just plain stupid. Mark stalls his car on the railroad track. He and Teen Angel get out okay, but she goes running back for his high-school ring and is pured by a train. Tommy—the hero of Ray Peterson's "Tell Laura I Love Her"—has all the right intentions, but is basically inept. He can't hack it on the stock-car track and is burned to a crisp in his blazing car.

If you're looking for consistent villains in the teenage-suicide tune, the stand-outs are snobby parents and the class system. The classic "Leader of the Pack" relates how Bett's folks tell her that she has to dump greaser Jimmy and how, in consequence, he rides into the night to total his bike and himself. Similarly, the song

"Patches" tells how Dickie Lee's parents forbid him to marry a bimbo from the wrong side of the tracks. (Presumably, they'll cut him off without a cent.) Patches takes this badly and is found "floating face down in that dirty old river." In a matter of hours, Dickie joins her. With "I Can Never Go Home Any More," the Shangri-Las turn the tables: The kid runs away and mom dies of a broken heart.

The Shangri-Las are the only band, to my knowledge, that actually cut two death hits; they seem to have had a feel for grief. What made "Leader of the Pack" such a landmark is that they went right to the heart of adolescent fantasy masochism. The fact that the hero is called Jimmy is almost enough on its own. In the conventions of those days—and particularly in the drive-in movies of those days—anyone called Jimmy was instability in a black leather jacket. James Dean was the key, and it wasn't just a matter of his real-life auto destruction. Even before he exited in his Porsche, Dean had died twice on network TV, playing a crazy mixed-up punk once on "Schlitz Playhouse" and again on "General Electric Theatre" (in which he costarred with Ronald Reagan). In the '50s and early '60s, the juvenile-delinquent antihero had to die. He might be sympathetic, but he was technically the bad guy and, still in the shadow of the Hays Code, Hollywood couldn't be seen to let the bad guy triumph. Reform was boring and a prison stretch wouldn't sit well with the kids in the audience; the easy out was for the teenage hoodlum to go down in a hail of bullets in the final frames. The intended message was that the wages of cool were death, but all too often it was translated in rock 'n' roll as "death is cool."

By the mid-'60s, with Bob Dylan singing about psychosis and nuclear war, the teen-suicide tune started to appear redundant. Jimmy Cross' "I Want My Baby Back" ridiculed the form with a claim that it was the story of the other half of the "Leader of the Pack" car wreck. Jan Berry of Jan and Dean did restore some credibility, however, by surviving "Dead Man's Curve," though suffering permanent brain damage.

It's hard, however, to keep a good genre down. Also, where death is concerned, there seems to be a built-in escalation. Just as horror movies mutated from *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* to *Slumber Party Massacre*, Jody Reynolds' saved suicide has been transformed into Julie Brown's mindless mass-murderess. "Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun" takes the Shangri-Las and blends them with Carrie and the real life of little Brenda Spencer, who shot up the schoolyard with her dad's rifle because going to school on Monday depressed her. (Brenda became the subject of *The Boomtown Rats*' "I Don't Like Mondays," which is not included on the album.) The finale, if you wanted to be pretentious, could be called a summation of true '80s nihilism. Debbie the homecoming queen is gunned down by the cops, and with her dying breath tells her best friend why.

"I did it . . . for Johnny."

"Like, who's Johnny? Answer me, Debbie! Who's Johnny?"

But Deb's gone.

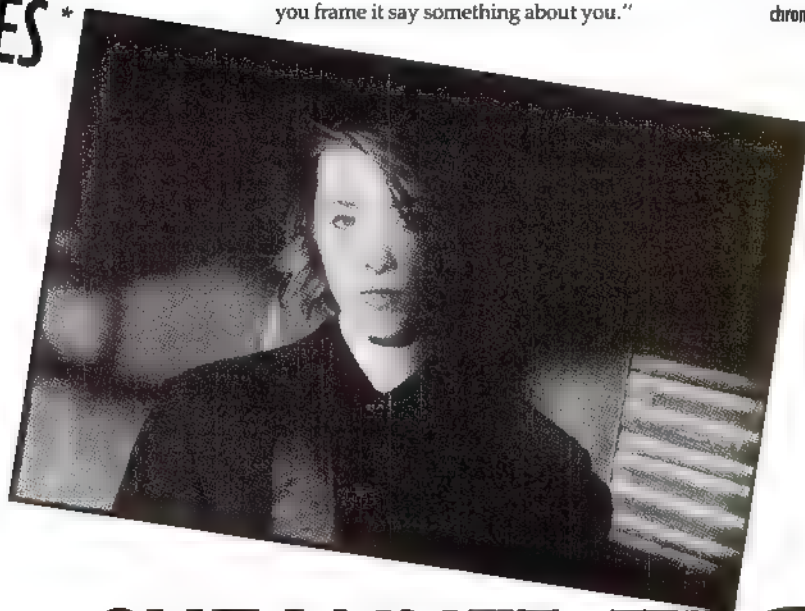
—Mick Farren

STRAIGHT LINES *

"I like songs to be concise; I like them to have a point of view; I like them to have an angle, like a photograph. The way you angle it and the way you frame it say something about you."

***STRAIGHT LINES**, One of ten songs on the debut album from Suzanne Vega. Available on A&M Records and chrome cassettes from BASE.

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Photo: Charles Beatty



SUZANNE VEGA



Van Morrison
A Sense of Wonder
Polygram

I tell you, my friends, it's a cursedly sad day when you have to question whether your hero—long-thought to be the living light-fountain—still possesses the wild, rude sincerity, direct from nature, that earned him your affection and admiration in the first place. So you can just imagine my lamentable state of mind when I listened to Van Morrison's new sides, *A Sense of Wonder*, and came away disheartened by the little Gaelic soul man, who has been a big man to me, going back as far as the "Brown-Eyed Girl" and *Astral Weeks* days. Part of my heart died when I realized that I couldn't stand in the witnessbox, after having sworn on a stack of *Christgau's Record Guide* to testify that this album is satisfying.

Only listeners in search of the shallowest entertainment couldn't find something rare, strange or beautiful on *Sense*. But these are qualities one has come to expect from a Van Morrison record, even a less-than-satisfying one. And therein lies the album's major flaw. Van has nudged the songs on this album onto a well-worn track, but only on the instrumental cuts, "Boffycrow and Spike" and "Evening Meditation," do they really accelerate, change gears, or turn at alarming angles from a predictable course.

Songs like "Tore Down a la Rimbaud," "Ancient Days," "The Master's Eyes" and "Let the Slave" are crowded with symbolism and images and the play of intellect, showing that Van Morrison is still a romantic visionary who likes to weave richly embroidered songs about love, nature and art. And cover versions of Ray Charles' "What Would I Do Without You" and Mose Allison's "If You Only Knew" further document his passion and genius for interpreting and refashioning blues and R&B material.

But while there is an ounce or two of goodness on most—if not all—of the tunes mentioned, be it a gem of insight into the motives and affairs of men, or a precious spurt of sensuous music, the album is, overall, distressing. It's distressing because it lacks the extraordinary integrity and sense of courageous artistic struggle that initially made Morrison's music so appealing and compelling.

Van Morrison makes a serious error with *A Sense of Wonder* by making it simply a lackluster repetition of themes,

moods, and sounds done to death on so many of his other albums. This continuity keeps the record from being thought of as counterfeited or contradictory, but enough is enough.

Come on, Van. Where's that much-needed surge of creative imagination that could have resulted in tremendous experimentation with familiar styles, instrumentation and delivery? Where is that sense of wonder of the album's title?

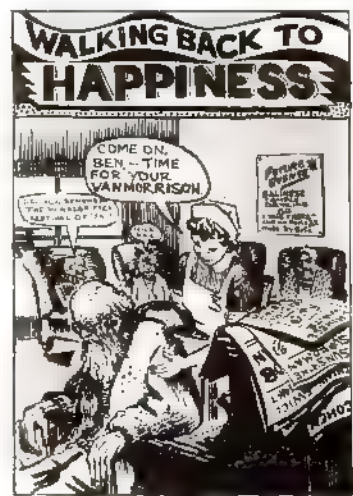
Of the vocal tracks, the only one that inspires a sense of wonder is "Let the Slave incorporate The Price of Experience," with its William Blake text. It's not a particularly exciting tune, but Blake's passionate musings on freedom draw you in deeper and deeper. While listening to it, I kept thinking that I would like a fine classical actor like Sir Laurence Olivier or Ian McKellen (who played Salieri in the Broadway production of *Amadeus*) to translate the song on stage. The language is so great, it deserves to be somewhere else other than on this record.

What keeps me from losing all faith in Van Morrison are the two instrumental tracks on the album, "Boffycrow and Spike" and "Evening Meditation." The former is a bouncy, whimsical, actually quite beautiful, simple and unaffected tune that shows a fertile cross-pollination of Irish-dance and country-and-western music ideas and styles. I absolutely adore this number. I can imagine a bunch of crazed leprechauns and fairies having a wild-ass hoedown in some enchanted forest. Chris Michie's guitar work on "Boffycrow" is nothing short of irresist-

ible. "Meditation" brings to mind ancient priests, magicians and wizards moaning mysterious Celtic blues-drones long into the night. My God, Van, why couldn't you have touched me with the rest of the songs on *Sense* the way you have with these two?

It really bothers me that I can't highly recommend this album. I mean, I really love Van Morrison. Now I know what my girlfriends have meant when they said that I let them down. When someone you like really lets you down, it can really fuck with you. Damn, what a drag.

—David Earl Jackson



© Bill Products

UNDERGROUND

Column by Andrea Enthall

Mutants are the future of rock 'n' roll. Raise British boys on American R&B in the '50s and you get music a half-twist removed from the Beatles and Stones. Beneath today's surface, tomorrow's rock is always twisting, which is why you should always keep an ear underground.

Squeezing bargain-basement melodies from the corpse of music past, Jesus and Mary Chain celebrate pleasant, simple pop. All they have are their voices, one lead guitar, one bass, and drums, to which they add feedback like a high-school public-address system stuffed into your ear. On "Never Understand" the feedback shrieks like the zealous adolescent screams that drowned out the Beatles on every live record. On "Upside Down" it's a sheer blast of power that threatens to overtake the big-beat drum and wrest control of the song. It buries Jim Reid's gentle and harmonic vocals, as if he'd sung them for a braking train. Jesus are not trying to make notes out of feedback or bend them into Hendrixian squalls. Like a synthesizer in hell, or a siren at full wail, the sound of feedback is an instrument in itself, mixed in among the ruins of discarded Beatles and Byrds. You don't need to ground your turntable to play Jesus and Mary records 'cause the hum will fit right in, and parents will scream to "get that shit off the stereo—now!" Which is possibly the highest compliment one generation can pay to the music of the next. "Upside Down" is released by Creation Records, 38 Angus Ave., East Kilbride, Glasgow G74 3TU, Scotland, and "Never Understand" (on Blanco y Negro, distributed by British Warner Brothers) is available as a seven-inch, two-track or 12-inch three-track at any reasonably stocked import shop.

Passages of piano, cello, and violin don't usually make white-knuckled

rock 'n' roll, but under the poundingly intense hands of Bone Orchard, a piano blurts like a sudden calling owl and the soft whine of strings can be as spooky as a cold crypt. When Archie Bunker ordered Edith to "stifle it," she did, but when vocalist Chrissy McGee tries to suppress her fright, the result is an ice-cold frenzy of shimmering calm, giving way to tight-throated mumbles that burst, like Donald Duck truntrums, into maniacal whispers. "Whores flank the stairway," moans Chrissy over the rusty grate of strings. "Clean limbs separate/Flesh racks the garbage bucket," she continues, with the word "flesh" a soft, indecipherable projectile from her lips. Along with Inca Babies and Scientists, Orchard is part of a new breed of primal rock 'n' rollers taking vocal and instrumental techniques from Nick Cave and his now-defunct Birthday Party. But for Orchard, there's a twist. As a female, McGee can never sound anything like Cave, but with this mutation she takes music a baby step into its frightening future, screaming and moaning every meter of the way. Bone Orchard's album *Jack* is catalog number FREUD 6 from Jungle Records, 24 Gaskin St., London N1 2RY, England.

Another female vocalist working the underside of rock is Cozey Fanni Tutti, who, with husband Chris Carter, made heavy-duty electro-industrial mantras during the late '70s in a group called Throbbing Gristle. Now paired with Brian Williams, as *Conspiracy International*, the three have produced *Two*, a pounding journey through territory one drone-level removed from Kraftwerk. Cozey has a voice like angel hair—deep and sensuous, floating mistily on rhythm, drawing out every word to its longest, sleekest form. Like an electrical tranquilizer, *Two* is two long, throbbing dance-trance patterns, spinning lusciously in circles, seemingly with no end in sight. Chris and Cozey's address is BM CTL, London WC1 3XX, England. For two international reply coupons and a self-addressed envelope, they'll send you more information about their work than you could possibly ever want.

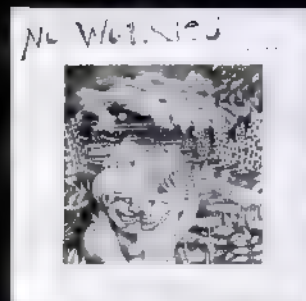
Dark and heavy, with a tribal streak lifted from the jungles of the band's native Philadelphia, *You Can't Hum When You're Dead* is a compilation of previously released *Executive Slacks* tracks. Produced by former Killing Joke member Youth, *Hum* is a droning, repetitive dose of Killing Joke's bass shards, harsh and angular, with a beat

and pulse like molasses sliding down a refrigerator door. Guitars crawl sinisterly, leaving great antidisco streaks. Vocalist Matt Marcello never sings; he growls, rants, bleats, and pounds clumps of syllables out of his mouth like Frankenstein discovering vocal chords. Fundamental Music, P.O. Box 2309, Covington, Georgia 30209, is the source.

If '50s rockabilly was a mating of country and R&B, then Inca Babies' Cramps/Cave music might be a slow-motion mating of rockabilly with a primal scream. Though short on logic, the Babies' mondo hysterical sea-saw of bass sinew, bluntly thunking beat, and loops of subterranean mumble-grumble has a poetic surrealism that makes every man a monster. From the Peckinpah-esque "She Mercenary," which opens side one, through "Mr. Leucotomy big doc meat Boss," who "feeds his cat the best part of my thoughts" at side's end, there's no use trying to figure what Inca Babies is talking about. On *Rumble*, the point is macabre frenzy. Contact Black Lagoon Records, 117 William Kent Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M6 15, England, if you dare.

A city of crossword-puzzle skyscrapers hums willy-nilly to the lakebed as two strangely mutated lovers leer into each other's eyes on the cover of *No Worries*, a 14-track introduction to Down Under underground. As surreal as the real Australia, where Christmas comes at the height of summer and

Gondwanaland Project
The Celibate Rifles
Tuffmonks
Screaming Believers
Soggy Porridge
Bring Philip
Laughing Clowns
Busted Statues
Moving Targets
Deep Wound





Andrew Collin



Andrew Collin

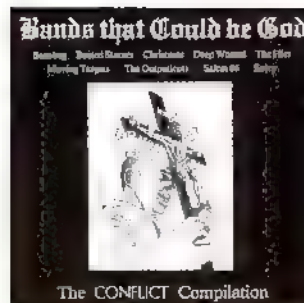


Andrew Collin

Heretics attempt to attack Jesus and Mary Chain, patron saints of London's underground music scene. The Devil using Old Man Alcohol provokes religious war at the Old Ambulance Station on Old Kent Road. Only the heroic efforts of True Believers prevents band from being crucified. Needless to say, a good time was had by all.

kids spend January writing homesick letters to mom, *Worries* is the only place where you can find the *Birthday Party*, *Celibate Rifles*, and *Soggy Porridge* on the same disc. *Gondwanaland Project's* deep and throbbing "love you" loops are performed on didgeridoo, the Australian aborigines' long, black wooden trumpet. With soft, acid-trip guitar, the *Triffids* twist lines like "hey, hey little girl" into creepy-crawly visions of *Apocalypse Now* in the slowly unfolding "Left to Rot." The upbeat *Screaming Believers* play crazy jazz/ska horns with echo-laden vocals, and the *Scientists* nurture the kernel of an American Western theme and torture it with their own hypnotic dementia. In a twilight zone where American and British traditions merge, slightly out of focus, to be picked up and mutilated before posting back to their source, the bands of the Australian underground are fresh, yet vaguely familiar, leaving something tantalizingly amiss. Hot Records, 314-316 Victoria St., Darlinghurst, Sydney, N.S.W. 2010, Australia, offers these songs for \$14.00 (Australian currency) on album (*WORRIED 1*) or cassette (*NO NO NO 1*).

There's something just as intriguingly amiss about *I'll Show Harry*, an avant-gloom band from Factory territory—Manchester, England (of Joy Division/New Order fame). Delicate rhythm sticks tap out a post-punk gamelan jazz jam on "In From the Outback." "Horse," with music reminiscent of de Niro's psycho monologues in *Taxi Driver*, slowly evolves out of Harry's torn-napkin vocal style—soft and ragged, subdued, and couched in hollow sarcasm. "Pusher" is a trafficscape of deep, passing sweeps and guitar-produced car horns over what could have been a perky beat, if there wasn't such a dark feeling about the whole affair. It's that air of stepping into a sophisticated '30s mystery movie that makes *I'll Show Harry* something to show Tom and Dick, too. The seven-inch, gift-wrapped EP comes from the band itself, 80 Perryman Close, Hulme, Manchester M15 6DR, England.



From Boston, where accents are every bit as exotic as in the deepest Aussie Outback, comes *Bands That Could Be God*, a modestly titled sampler featuring nine New England pop and hardcore ensembles. Snotty, storytelling *Beanbag* reveals its secret ways to harass strangers with deliberately off-key vocals and cheesy Farfisa-style synth. Sixties-inspired softies *Salem 66* spin pop melodies that drip with lovely female harmonies. And *Christmas*, with its folksy, naive jangles, single-fingered piano picking and galloping John Philip Sousa rhythms, marches through "\$100 Million Flowers," before tackling "My Little Book of Lies." With deceptively angelic tones, "Lies" is a Cook's tour of hell, inspired by the prayer line that's comforted millions of bedside children: "If I should die before I wake. . . ." *Moving Targets* contributes thrashing, metallic hardcore, and in 39 seconds *Deep Wound* doesn't just thrash, it thrashomatics—so hard and fast, you'd think you'd been assaulted by a used-car pitchman on late-night TV. Beantown's underground bands aren't all gods, but on the basis of these tracks, a few deserve nomination to the hall of saints. You can decide for yourself which ones by sending \$6.98 to Conflict, 9 Jeffrey Rd., Wayland, MA 01778.

If you would like to know more about these records, the labels, the names of stores in your area that sell underground rock, and the distributors that sell these records to stores, send a stamped and self-addressed envelope to: *Underground*, Andrea 'Enthal, SPIN, 1965 Broadway, NY, NY 10023.



Singles

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(Nothing less than seven inches—guaranteed.)

Column by John Leland



As the search for the perfect beat shatters the myth of segregated music markets and makes the term "crossover" almost obsolete, the 12-inch extended dance single has replaced the album as the most vital medium in pop music. Its beat-laden grooves are the turf where Afrika Bambaataa meets Johnny Rotten, where Run-D.M.C. creates a badass synthesis of rap and heavy metal, where Bruce Springsteen gets people to dance in the dark, where James Brown gets back on the good foot for his godchildren, where Tina Turner meets the Aibion new wave and rides it to heaven, where D St. scratches Herbie Hancock's street itch and where former luddite Bob Dylan is now throwing down to the beat-box groove of Arthur Baker. Twelve-inch singles break quickly, so they're perfect for the one-shot collaborations between unlikely partners that are generating some of our most exciting music. They expand the rigid three-minute single format to sync with the increasingly influential, looser grooves of African and Latin pop. With the exception of the American roots movement, the 12-inch is in the vanguard of all of the laudable trends in the increasingly interracial, international pop scene.

Beastie Boys: "Rock Hard" & "Party's Gettin' Rough" b/w "Beastie Groove" (Def Jam)

What started as a bad joke has turned into a badass groove thing, as the Beastie Boys turn in three fake raps that rock the house. The bratty crew gave hip hop a

nasty comeuppance with 1983's "Cookie Puss," an obnoxious send-up of the rap/scratch vibe that was as funny as it was hateful. Moving closer to the pulse on the new disc, they tap into Run-D.M.C.'s metal/rap synthesis and Mr. T postures, and carry them to parodic extremes. I mean, no one has a beat this big and this wet. While this platter delivers ample boasts for the buck, the Beasties never take themselves or their genre too seriously. In "Rock Hard," they brag that they're "Not just b-boys/We're real rock stars." In "Party's Gettin' Rough," the producer quits (on tape) in mid-song, dismissing the Beasts as "a bunch of funky monkey idiots." The latter track even includes a scratch from Led Zep's "Whole Lotta Love." The Latin Rascals edited the mess, so you know it cuts a hard, angular groove. (5 University Place, New York, NY 10003)

Sade: "Smooth Operator" (Portrait/CBS)

Say what you will about the rise of funk rock, the most significant crossover territory right now is sophisticated pop soul. Remember: In the year of Bruce Springsteen and the Purple Prince, Lionel Richie sold more records than either of them. As Richie has proven, this subgenre is prone to blandness, which makes the hauntingly captivating music of Sade all the more important. "Smooth Operator," with its debt to George Benson's "This Masquerade," is cocktail jazz at its most elegant: seductive surfaces, inviting textures, and an alluringly inscrutable chanteuse. I'm suspicious of music that's so patently upwardly mobile—probably just my own insecurity. If I let my suspicion prevent me from falling in love with this slick trick, I'm a fool.

General Public: "Tenderness" b/w "Never You Done That" (I.R.S.)

The New York dance mafia turned out to put the beat behind both sides of this single from the world's most unaffected fun pop band. John "Jellybean" Benitez remixed the A-side, and Arthur Baker remixed vocal and dub versions of the flip. The unheralded but hot Latin Rascals edited the B-side. Baker has a slightly better song to work with, and his overhaul gives it a shot in the arm. But Jellybean's breakdown—electronic clapping, riffing with percolating guitar strumming—throws down Baker's displaced beat box. It's a great showdown.

Howard Jones: "Things Can Only Get Better" (Elektra)

Howard Jones' blue-eyed funk is a clinic in electronic studio dance groove. If that sounds dry, well, those are the breaks. Fortunately, he has a knack for hooks and an equally impressive flair for letter-perfect arrangements. If "Things Can Only Get Better" (presented here in two versions) never went into its sugary and rhythmically diffuse—and mercifully short—chorus, it would be unstoppable. It mines the best of the Anglo soul movement: a clean slap-bass line, precise horns and synths, and some really well-paced, inviting singing.

Commodores: "Nightshift" (Motown)

Since inflicting Lionel Richie on the world, the band that was once the dominant force in black make-out pop has kept a low profile. "Nightshift," an inspired tribute to Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson, puts the group back on the map with a vengeance. Its spare, lilting Caribbean groove dispenses with the group's penchant for schmaltz, and new lead singer J. D. Nicholas' sweet tenor is all late-night yearning. This track was meant to amble, and the new 12-inch club mix gives it added punch and more room to stretch out. It's hard to believe the band vehemently fought Motown's decision to release this as a single.

Spoonie Gee: "Street Girl" (Tuff City)

Veteran rapper Spoonie Gee is the flyest one-man crew in creation, and this collaboration with young blood Davey DMX cuts anything else in this column. Like previous Spoonie raps, "Street Girl" is a running story delivered in the master's satin-smooth style. But instead of being a loverboy come-on, this one explores the darker side of romance. The heroine is a gold-digging femme fatale who runs her games once too often and gets retired early by her newly-hipped sugar daddy. Spoonie was never a libbie, and this morality play runs into misogynist stereotypes, but in the end his sympathies lie with the girl. If this sounds downbeat without a purpose, it's at least compelling. Davey DMX, forsaking the turntables for his namesake drum machine and a spare synth hook, provides a perfect, haunting, streetwise backdrop for the bleak tale, and Spoonie has never rapped with more conviction. (46-31 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, NY 11101).



John Reardon



Redds & the Boys: "Movin' and Groovin'" (T.T.E.D./Island)

Word is that the groove we'll be moving to by year's end will come from Chocolate City, as Island busts the capital's go go sound nationwide. In case you missed the greasy R&B precedents set by Trouble Funk and Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers, go go is about a whole lotta cats getting loose over a low-tech Southern goodfoot session. An antidote to beat box isolationism, this thing is pure community involvement. If you need a reference point, try J.B.'s cosmically sloppy "Doing It to Death." "Movin' and Groovin'" is something of a go go anthem, as Redds & the Boys—basically a rhythm section plus horns—go into the funk and shout about how good it is to be there. Song, sonics and innovation don't really matter; the important thing is working up a hearty no-attitude sweat and letting the bass and drums move your body. When this vibe lands uptown, we could be in for murder.

The Time: "The Bird" b/w "My Drawers" (Warner Bros.)

A major flaw of *Purple Rain* was that it asked us to believe that Prince is a better live act than The Time. No way. Granted, on vinyl Morris Day and his now-former colleagues have had their problems. But this extended remix of "The Bird" comes close enough to capturing the band's leopard-skin razzle-dazzle to give the overextended Kid a run for his considerable money. Day exhorts us to give it up in a shameless call to boogie: "White folks/You're much too tight/You got to shake your hands like the black folks/You might get some tonight." The flip is perfunctory, but the longer, wilder A makes this the definitive Time capsule. The best song from the movie is the best slice of black rock on the market.

Jazzy Jay: "Def Jam" b/w "Cold Chillin' in the Place" (Def Jam)

Jazzy Jay is one of the foremost scratchers in hip hop, and he's in top form on both sides of this hardcore beat-box blaster. Unfortunately, icy synthesized vocals take the edge off the A-side, providing a lusterless foil to Jay's choppy syncopations. On the flip, however, things get loose, as Russell "Rush" Simmons, manager of the stars, lays down a ca-reening, jive monologue over Jay's monster beat, flapping about who he is and how much money they'll make by not using a band. Simmons doesn't drive the

track like a rapper, but his unmeted spiel, set against the gutbucket rhythm track, gives this sucker an unthrashable dynamic. (5 University Place, New York, NY 10003)

Grandmaster Flash: "Sign of the Times" b/w "Larry's Dance Theme" (Elektra)

By now, y'all know all about "Sign of the Times," the debut single by the first second-generation rap group. A serviceable but also predictable post-"Message" throwdown, it's more deft than def—a first sign of professionalism rearing its ugly head in hip hop. But I'm here to tell you about the B-side, "Larry's Dance Theme," a scratch-and-edit job that would seem like a throwaway if it weren't so damned much fun. If the seminal days of Flash parties and unprocessed hairdos are behind the Grandmaster, his wit is still intact: he creates this whole track around his dancer's first name. Flash can still manipulate the wheels of steel, and still work the party right.

Imperial Brothers: "Live It Up" (Cutting)

The Imperial Brothers' weird optimism in the face of hard times strikes me as a facile take on Run-D.M.C.'s no-bullshit orthodoxy. But if the regal siblings don't free your mind, this unheralded 12-inch indie goes a long way toward liberating your hindquarters. Cutting Records is committed to no-holds-barred dub versions, and the back side of this 'un offers more non-stop action than any other on the market. Hard-core syncopated snare beat, punctuated by pitched and unpitched percussion, keeps the pressure on from the jump. The brothers talk a little trash on the dub, which works a lot better than the preaching on the A-side. (111 Dyckman St., New York, NY 10040)

Simple Minds: "Don't You (Forget About Me)" (A&M)

Scotland's Simple Minds are the most credible and likable of the post-punk dance bands from across the Atlantic, because they eschew facile gloom and pretension, and because they deliver honest songs. While the songs do stick to tidy formulas, the band works them to its ad-

vantage, using them to set off the music's emotional content. "Don't You (Forget About Me)," a romantic and melancholy dance track, therefore cuts ice both in the living room and on the dance floor. Jim Kerr (Mr. Chrissie Hynde) and his cohorts give you more meat than Wham, and more fire than the Cure, while satisfying all of the other needs filled by either band. The 12-inch, unfortunately, is a weak offering; the long, long version is lifted from the soundtrack of *The Breakfast Club*.

SIDESWIPEs

Mantronix's "Fresh Is the Beat" (Sleeping Bag) is a straight-ahead, unforced rap with the savvy to transcend its unimaginative rhythm-machine program (1974 Broadway, New York, NY 10023) . . . **"King Kut,"** by **Word of Mouth**, featuring **DJ Cheese**, is the impressive first single from Duke Bootee's Beauty and the Beat Label, and if Cheese quotes Run-D.M.C.'s Master Jay, it's only to prove what league he's in (125 Broad St., Elizabeth, NJ 07201) . . . **Whiz Kid's** "He's Got the Beat" (Tommy Boy) features some sinister cutting, but bows down to an inane synth line and melody (1747 First Avenue, New York, NY 10128) . . . "Trouble," by **Kool Kyle and Billy** (Profile), uses an R&B-ized "Secret Agent Man" guitar hook to launch a respectable, if unspectacular, social-consciousness rap . . . **Choice M.C.** doesn't quite distinguish itself from its more illustrious neighbors on the shuffling "Brooklyn Style" (Rocky, Junrae Distributors, Flushing, NY 11354) . . . "Bop Bop," by **Fats Comet and the Big Sound** (a.k.a. the old Sugar Hill house rhythm section), is a quasi-novelty collage which hits a groove that only these guys could render (World, 184 Norfolk St., #6C, New York, NY 10002) . . . **Yello's** frenetic "Vicious Games" (Elektra) is

fast-paced European electrodisco that never stretches itself into a groove . . . If you've been wondering whatever happened to **Kajagoogoo**, you have too much time on your hands. "Turn Your Back on Me," by Kaja (EMI-America) answers that question: not much . . . gimmick-master **Chaz Jankel** finds himself one gimmick short on "Number One" (A&M), a clever pop tune that has no place in a dance production . . . **George Duke** whips up a promising jazz/hip hop/rock synthesis on "Thief in the Night" (Elektra), only to lose it when the funkless vocals come in . . . and **Teena Marie's** "Jammin'" (Epic), though too tightly wound, ultimately evolves into a driving discoid groove. **B**

Searching for the perfect beat: clockwise from top, Chocolate City go go's funkmeisters Redds and the Boys; Beastie Boys Mike D, MCA, Ad Rock and DJ Double R, giving hip hop the heebee-jeebees with a nasty send-up of rap/scratch vibes; Ranking Roger and Dave Wakeling, a.k.a. General Public, darlings of the New York dance mafia; and Mike D, lead singer of the Beastie Boys, waits for the Beastie Bus.







SOUNDS LIKE THE TALKING HEADS

They've been smart, they've been funky. They've been solo artists, movie stars, an art band and a dance band. But they're still new wave after all these years.

The Talking Heads invented the modern rock band. They found that if you're honest and sincere, it's possible people with similar feelings will discover you. They were the first band to have a girl play in the band without being the centerpiece or an Ikette. The Talking Heads discovered that a good, plain look can be the best look of all.

The Talking Heads image was no image. They looked suspiciously regular. They dressed like students. They dressed like housewives. The Talking Heads sang songs you could dance to that had nothing to do with love or sex. Instead, the songs were about buildings, government, and people with mental problems. When they did a song about something conventional, like "Drugs," it was not so much a song about drugs as a stand-in for drugs.

The Talking Heads were the first American band to go to art school. Britain had art-school bands, like Roxy Music, but in Britain, one out of three people goes to art school to learn things like roof thatching. The Talking Heads combined a total modern-art sensibility with a total "wha' sup" awareness of the state of hip dance music. It was as if Andy Warhol were in Kool and the Gang.

Words for songs appear in a bubble above lead singer David Byrne's head. David Byrne has a big head, which is why he wears the big suit. He looks like a normal person, but slightly "off." Any more off and he would be one of those people you can't stop staring at. He was into a Silicon Valley Boy style years before the movie *Revenge of the Nerds* was a hit. He looks like he ate a lot of beef jerky for breakfast. If

David Byrne's bags were searched at customs, it would probably be for military secrets, not drugs. He was the first modern rock star to sound white and not English. Almost every rock singer before him sounded like a black cockney with an erection from the Merseysippi Delta.

When he opened his mouth, he created a thousand singers. More, actually. David Byrne revolutionized singing. He sings like a man whose hair is on fire. His voice has a strong, lurid appeal. It's his natural voice, but it jumps when he gets excited. He can sing words that are very heartfelt, but come out sounding like he's being strangled.

David Byrne is the heebie-geebee man. Nobody sang like that before. Nobody danced like that. He's always moving, like a house in motion. His moves are based on agility by implication—how far can he stumble without falling, how much balance can he lose without losing his balance? Remember the song, "Nobody can do the shing-a-ling like I do . . . Nobody can do the boogaloo like I do . . ." Well, nobody can do hip spasms . . . nobody can do the surfin' gooseneck or the dippety-doo or the hepilptic hop like David do.

Originally, David Byrne is from Baltimore, the same hometown as John Waters, Divine, Frank Zappa, H.L. Mencken and F. Scott Key. He grew up in a neighborhood that's a cross between lower-class suburban and run-down rural. David's father worked for Westinghouse as an electronics engineer. David could have, too, but art seemed like more fun. The kind of art that influenced his songs are

paintings done by what's described as "outsiders," primitive people who might be schizophrenic and have no contact with the art world. "Outsiders" don't try to make something pretty. They got their own style that has nothing to do with the real world and is definitely not for public consumption.

The idea for the Talking Heads started with Chris Frantz. David had written some songs and didn't know what to do with them. Chris kept saying, "Let's start a band." Chris Frantz is a powerhouse drummer, but back then he looked like he was in nursing school. Today, even in black leather pants, he looks like a professor. He's the kind of guy you want to sit next to you on an airplane. He has a way of putting you at ease. It must be his southern upbringing. Paging through the first issue of SPIN, Chris Frantz came across the album cover of the Butthole Surfers and laughed: "Can you imagine being in a band that you can't tell your mother the name of?"

Chris is trustworthy, loyal and kind; someone you'd buy a used car from. He's married to Tina Weymouth, his college flame. She offered to play bass and David taught her. Tina is cool. She always looked very attractive, but she also looks like she can take a lawn mower apart and put it back together again in a half-hour. On stage she had the most perfect blank expression. Now when she performs, she smiles and looks radiant. Maybe it has something to do with her and Chris having a baby, or her having a chance to sing in her and Chris's band, the Tom Tom Club.

Keyboard player and guitarist Jerry Harrison looks like he keeps his little black book on a floppy disk. Before he

Article by Scott Cohen
and Glenn O'Brien

Photography by
George DuBose



CHRIS: We've been on the dance bandwagon long enough. As usual, it doesn't sound like what's currently fashionable.

was ■ Talking Head, he was a Modern Lover. The Modern Lovers, like the Talking Heads, was a thinking-man's band. Jerry Harrison thinks about what he does. He's not the type to just jump into something.

At first, David wrote songs at his house in the lower East Side and brought them, in a semi-finished state, to Long Island City, where the rest of the band lived. Then they'd work on a song until it was right.

The songs on *Fear of Music* were taped at Long Island City first and then brought back to the lower East Side, where David worked on them. The words to the songs came by way of instructions to himself for what ■ song should be about. The instructions for "Animals" were: Write a song where animals set bad examples. Originally, the song was mixed with another song about Jesus being a hairy animal, but he cut that part. The instructions for "Cities" were to make a more accurate picture of real cities, with the names and landmarks and places where kids hang out. "Cities" was to be a guide. These instructions had been building inside him for a long time.

The instructions for *Remain in Light* came from the music. He'd listen to the track and ask himself, "What does this sound like? Does this sound like ecstasy, or does it sound ominous but with a hint of ecstasy in it?" Some of the songs sounded kind of sad, but danceable at the same time. "The Listening Wind" had a melancholy feel, so he wrote a lyric that both told a story and had a melancholic edge. In "The Great Curve," the music was heavily rhythmic; so was "Born Under Punches." "Born Under Punches," has crazy rhythms that you ride like ■ mechanical bronco. That dictated this wacky vocal that was contrasted by smooth choruses. Once he got into a frame of mind that was generated by the music, he could then sit down for an hour or so and produce lots of disconnected words and phrases that seemed to fit that state of mind. Then he'd get very rational about it and edit the whole thing into ■ song.

Speaking in Tongues took the process ■ step further. Even more songs were completely irrational. They had

absolutely no narrative content. The lyrics were almost a series of non sequiturs. After the band jammed a little in Long Island City, David took a cassette-player with him to Manhattan and selected the interesting fragments. The band learned those bits and played them back-to-back. When they had ■ few in succession, they had a song.

Meanwhile, David collected lots of phrases; any one of them could trip a whole host of associations that were funny. It could be ■ colloquial expression that, on its own, didn't mean much, but in the context in which it was said, sounded funny. It was pretty difficult working this way, because that phrase had to stand on its own merits. It couldn't be supported by anything around it. Each line had to have some kind of emotional impact.

The new Talking Heads album doesn't have a title yet, but it sounds like the Talking Heads. That's the album title Chris suggested: "Sounds like the Talking Heads." The band made a list of possible titles. A man from the record company said he liked "Popular Mechanics," but thought they might have a legal problem. He said when the sales force sees "Folk Songs," they're going to keel over. They're going to think the Talking Heads are making a folk album and buyers will stay away in droves. It never occurred to the Talking Heads that people would think the Talking Heads made an album of folk songs. The new album sounds the way the Talking Heads used to sound when it was just David, Tina, Chris and Jerry; no "Afro-influ," no mumbo jumbo. They went back to the basic band because of the songs, which aren't groove-oriented, but do groove. The songs are traditional. "Perfect World," "Give Me Back My Name," and "Road to Nowhere," are normal song titles. One is a country song, with pedal steel guitar. The songs are typical Talking Heads songs, about liking someone for their peculiarities, or watching a neighbor through her window, or watching lots of television and being proud of it.

The new album is great because, unlike their last couple of albums, you can hum along to it while in the shower.

TINA: I've moved practically every year of my life, and for me, geographic distance and time don't make a difference, really. For some people who don't know who or where they are, that could be a problem. If you have ■ loose ego and are not sure who you are, you pick your identities wherever you are. If you move around a lot, you might pick up accents. You may have been an American born in Texas, but then you go to England and you're talking like a cockney. For me, that's not the case. I'm comfortable seeing somebody after a year or 10 years. Until we started making this album, we hadn't played together as ■ band in a year. As usual, the band's coming back together came when we decided we didn't need each other anymore. For one thing, David got really interested in becoming a movie star. And a director, scriptwriter, and everything to do with movies. Jerry's been working on his second album and I've been ■ mother and a housewife. We wanted to get *Stop Making Sense* made because it was a real fun tour. We were feeling very good and very positive about it, and we wanted to get that show documented in some form, because we didn't think it would ever happen again. After that film was made, we didn't know where to go. And then when we got together in January, there was that feeling again, having come full circle. We were just four people singing some easy, simple songs with no pretensions to being avant garde, African or any of that. . . .

CHRIS: In the past, we did these long jamming grooves and then arranged them into songs. This time, we went back to the way we did our first few albums—to have a song written, rehearsed, and then go in and record it. We've gone back to the basic band. This record doesn't have drum machines. It doesn't have a lot of black backup vocals. The songs have a beginning, middle and end built into them, instead of having to create it by editing. It has a nice sound to it. A lot of people are going to be surprised. It has nice, pretty melodies and harmonies. The songs are kind of disarming in their approach. As usual, ■ doesn't sound like what's currently fashionable. We've been on the dance bandwagon long enough. Maybe we were one of the first on that bandwagon, but now everybody's on it. There's just too much competition [Laughs].

JERRY: I started my second album over a year ago; it got interrupted so many times. Sometimes it's good for things to be interrupted. You might not make the same mistakes you would make if you just went straight ahead. Most of it was made in Milwaukee. I like the idea of sort-of indigenous recording. I used people who either lived in Milwaukee or were passing through. I got David Van Tieghem and Dickie Landry when they passed through, playing with Laurie Anderson. And Robbie MacIntyre passed through with

the Pretenders.

Bootsy was supposed to come to Milwaukee to play on this record I was making, "Five Minutes," which was inspired by President Reagan's joke about Russia, "The bombing begins in five minutes." He was in D.C. Bootsy's manager had arranged for him to speak to the U.S. House of Representatives, something I would have loved to have seen. Bootsy's afraid to fly, so he drove all the way from D.C. I kept getting calls from this guy who'd say, "Bootsy's left Maryland now," "Bootsy's halfway through Pennsylvania," "I just want you to know that Bootsy just crossed into Indiana and he has to take a nap now." I never heard from Bootsy, just from this guy. I wondered if it was true. But he showed up. He did the recording, and the next day he got up and drove to Cincinnati.

JERRY: Sometimes it's good for things to be interrupted. You might not make the same mistakes you would make if you just went straight ahead.

TINA: We were just four people singing some easy, simple songs with no pretensions of being avant-garde.



DAVID: The important stuff in people's lives comes through in . . . what they think about and believe in. That's what I try to write about, rather than stuff that's bigger than life.



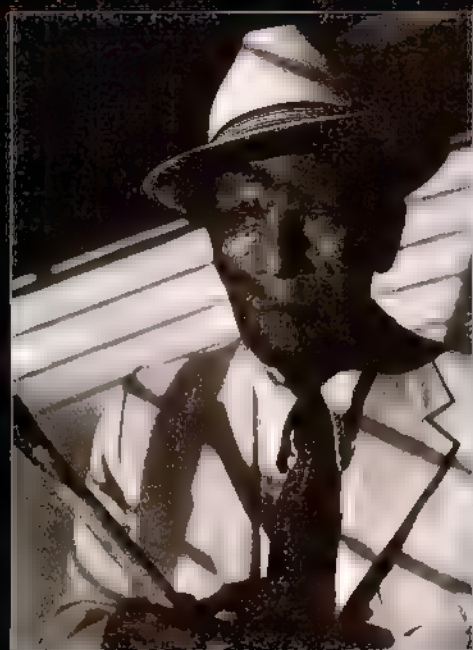
There's something spiritual about Wisconsin. It's a little staid. It gets boring, but I think I enjoyed being there this time more than any other time I've been there. And I grew up there. I had a purpose for being there, but I also didn't feel trapped. I didn't feel worried like you do when you're growing up in a place like that, where you might get stuck. I like living out of a suitcase. I like the feeling of only living for the day that you're in. On tour you sometimes have a sense of truly living in the present, as if there is no past. When I go to Europe, when I go to Holland, I find that I'll remember all the days that I was in Holland and I won't remember where I was the day before. It's like the locality takes over and time stops. You feel like you've broken the treadmill of life.

As much as I love playing with the big band and having a big entourage with us, I get kind of sick of playing large places. When we first went on tour, our audience was small and it was special. It was always the people that you'd want to meet in the town. There was never any fear of meeting them. Now it's gotten to the point where we really have security between us and the audience. Now you only meet people if you go out after the show, or if they have some way to get back stage. So now you meet the professionals. A professional groupie or a professional person from a radio station or record company. Although those people can be interesting, I like the freshness of going around meeting all kinds of people. I remember especially the first tour we did with the Ramones; we were their opening act going all over Europe. We met the most wonderful people. We went over to their houses. We got an instant feeling for every city. We were invited to all the places that might take you weeks to find. I can get nostalgic about touring. But I like performing. I love the excitement. I love the feeling that performers have of having to perform no matter what. No matter what you did the night before or how sick you are or whatever. It's something a lot of people don't understand. It's a cliché, I suppose, but it's true. People think nothing of calling in sick to the office.



Paul Norfin

DAVID: I wanted to write a song about a girl who can float. That song is called "And She Was." The words were written in bits and pieces over the last year and a half. Two months ago, I tried putting the words to different kinds of music. I'd put the words to music in one style, listen to it and rewrite it; put it in another style, listen to it and rewrite it. Eventually I got one that clicked. I didn't know I wrote it. I had written a bunch of verses and the band learned them real quick, quicker than I thought, so I had to come up with the rest real quick. I was writing that song before and after rehearsals. Then I was looking through some lyrics and I found two couplets that Chris had written years ago: "This is a perfect world" or "You're a perfect girl," or something like that, and "I'm riding on an incline/I'm staring at your face" and something else. I changed a few of the words. It had a bit of a bizarre quality I really liked, so I paired them with some words I had written and that became "Perfect World." A couple of songs were written in Los Angeles. One, "Road to Nowhere," is a kind of gospel Cajun march. It's a happy, upbeat song; all these people singing about being on the road to oblivion. I wrote "Creature of Love," a country-and-western song, in New York. I mentioned to the band that I wanted to write a song about when people sleep together, they produce these little creatures six or seven inches tall. I thought that would be funny. But I didn't know how to write the song. All I had was one section; two couplets that I liked: "Little creatures of love/ With two arms and two legs/ From a moment of passion/ Now they cover the bed." Sure enough, it turned into a country-and-western song. On the surface at least, it sounds like a straightforward, heart-rending tune, but the subject is a little bit odd. The beauty of it was writing a ballad, instead of some spooky little monster stomp. That was the challenge. The important stuff in people's lives comes through in their living, in what they think about and what they believe in. That's what I try to write about, rather than writing about stuff that's bigger than life.



Article and Color Photography
by Glenn O'Brien

Black-and-White Photography
by Perry Ogden

"Yey, yey, I'm on my way,
Won't be back for many a
day."



up-arriving carnival journalists. Blaring from its tape player, a steel-band version of *The Flight of the Bumblebee*, probably the greatest version of *The Flight of the Bumblebee* ever recorded. We drive into the night, toward some mountains dotted with urban lightbulbs that are Port of Spain, the capital of Carnival country.

There are a lot of tankers bobbing off Trinidad. There is oil here, and natural gas, and industry. This is not a poor country. This is not Haiti, where people starve, cut down all the trees for fuel, and sew baseballs for slave wages. Here, everyone seems to have a decent job and a gorgeous, though small, highly polished Japanese sedan. During my entire stay in Trinidad, I will not see one car beat up mine.

"Carnival" comes from the Latin words, *caro*, *carnis*, meaning "flesh" and *levare*, "to comfort or lighten." It is supposed to mean comforting the body in anticipation of a period of fasting, specifically, the 40 days of Lent. Carnival is big in New Orleans, where it's known as Mardi Gras, and in Brazil, in Venice, and on the Riviera; wherever Christianity has forged an alliance with paganism, or vice-versa.

But experienced carnivaleers say that nowhere is Carnival more carnivalesque than in Trinidad, where it is the national holiday—like Christmas and New Year's Eve and Halloween and the Fourth of July all in one—but more. It's 48-plus hours of

CALYPSO

Trinidadians would rather dance with you than fight with you.

Ladies an, uh, gentlemen... I suppose you're wondering why we haven't left the gate. Well, we got all kinds of red lights showing up here...

British West Indies Airlines. Still, the pilot sounds like Chuck Yeager, like the Right Stuff, like Oklahoma... crisp, dry, casual. If the pilot had a Trinidadian lilt to his voice, I probably would have gotten off the plane right then.

Five hours after departure time, I called my wife.

"Hello dear, I'm in Cuba."

"How great! What's it like?"

Totally unruffled. She believes me. Trinidad is a six-hours-plus flight, and she really thinks I'm in Havana.

"Gee this is a great connection," she says.

"Yeah, that's cause I'm still at Kennedy."

This she cannot believe.

Seven hours later. Liftoff. Cheering from the entire wide-body load. Seven hours behind schedule. Six and a half more in the air. A still-perky crew gets on the horn. "Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to BWIA flight..." Welcome! Those stewards can improvise.

"Yey, yey, I'm on my way."

"Won't be back for many a day."

Stop in Antigua, arrive in Trinidad seemingly days later. Trinidad and Tobago Tourist Board jetney picks

non-stop partying and everything that entails.

Carnival originated among the ruling class in Trinidad, who held lavish masked balls before Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent. The slaves, free blacks and Indians were not permitted to take part in these celebrations, but they had their own holiday that coincided with Carnival: *canboulay* (from *cannes brulees*, or the burning of the cane.)

But the real carnival may be said to have begun in 1838 when the slaves of Trinidad were set free, and any Trinidadian could "play mas," dancing free in the streets. Today, everybody in Trinidad plays mas—gets out in the street to "jump up with a band."

"Bands" are groups of people costumed by one designer who dance together through the streets. Although they may contain groups of friends, they are open to anyone who buys a costume—usually ranging in price from \$100 to over \$300. The bands are totally integrated—blacks, whites, Indians, men, women, young, old, Trinidadians and foreigners. But you can't just appear for Carnival and play mas. Costumes are ready to be picked up in November, months before Carnival, so you have to be there or know someone who will be.

Each band has leaders and followers, a king and a queen. The kings' and queens' costumes are unbelievable. Most of them are so huge that they



need wheels for support. The most spectacular queens, the ones with the biggest wings, tails and crowns, tend to have rather Schwarzeneggerian thighs.

The costumes are simply amazing. Imagine wearing a dress 18 feet high, eight feet wide and ten feet long. Imagine being a one-man float in the Macy's parade, pulling this thing along, and not only pulling it, but dancing too and never losing a beat. Have you ever wanted to be a giant fish, the largest bird in the world, a nuclear mushroom cloud? This is your chance, baby.

About four weeks before Carnival, calypso tents open where dozens of "calypsonians" perform, vying for a spot in the semi-finals at which 24 performers compete for eight spots in the finals at the Dimanche Gras show. Dimanche Gras, literally "Fat Sunday," is the day before Carnival officially opens.

The Dimanche Gras show takes place at the race-track grandstands, where the Calypso Monarch is selected, as well as the most spectacularly costumed masqueraders who are called the King and Queen of Carnival.

Purists shun the name "calypso," preferring "kaiso," an African word meaning "well-done" or "bravo." "Calypso" is a Greek word, the name of the daughter of Atlas and Tethys, who reigned on the mythic isle of Ogygia and held Odysseus for seven years, bearing him three sons before his release. Calypso may have been an island queen, but many students of the music think a Greek name for it is wrong. They think "calypso" is a Europeanization of the African "kaiso." Or possibly that it derives from the French *carrouse*, to carouse, to drink hard. But whatever you call it, the music is the same, and the music is definitely of African origin.

African slaves were brought to the West Indies in the 17th Century to cut cane. Their music came with them. Music is a portable art that doesn't require a hiding place. One of the principal forms of West African music was that of the "kogolimas" or storytellers. They attended kings, praising with mockery and lying with wit, and they improvised songs dealing with current events for the people, giving praise where it was due, but just as often applying ridicule and sarcasm. Such an institution was bound to survive, to thrive, even in slavery.

Early kaisos that have survived relate historical events or depict the lifestyles of the poor and enslaved, but with humor and spirit.

The calypsonian was the direct descendant of the king's fool—the little guy in bells we see in Shakespeare, cryptically bad-mouthing the king. In Africa, the fool resembled a troubadour or town crier. Each morning, he would wake the king by singing his praises in front of his house—sometimes "praising" his excesses, his oversights, his blunders and his foolishness, as well—and therefore loudly calling attention to his problems. The "kogolimas" had a kind of un-diplomatic immunity and it was very bad form for a king to act against his fool, no matter how foolishly vocal he became.

Calypso has continued the tradition. It's the great topical song form. The greatest calypsos are often those praising vast stupidity, national idiocy, and governmental incompetence. It's a kind of news broadcast you can dance to.

The first elections were held in Trinidad during 1925 and at election time the big calypso hit was Tiger's "Money Is King."

"A dog can walk about and pick up a bone
Fowlhead, stale bread, fish-tail and pone
If he is a good breed and not too wild
People will take it and mind as a child
But when a hungry man goes out to beg
They set a bulldog behind his leg
Twenty policeman will arrest him too
You see where a dog is better than you."

Calypsos dealing with the follies of the upper classes were always a hit, and in 1933 the singer King Radio advertised that he would be singing about "The Country Club Scandal" at a spot called the "Silky Millionaire's Tent." A huge crowd came to hear the song, including a very large group of policemen who came not to hear the song. Orders went to the stage that the "Country Club Scandal" was not to be sung. But the leader of the biggest political party in Trinidad took a seat on the stage and told King Radio in a loud voice: "Let the police do their damndest. I am by your side."

And so King Radio sang:

"From the swimming pool
To the servants' room
That is where
Mrs. X met her doom
The Country Club scandal
Was a hideous bacchanal."

King Radio was not arrested, but in 1934, calypsonians were put under the jurisdiction of the police and British colonial officers, who could censor songs and ban records. There were riots during 1937 in Trinidad, and a calypso dealing with them, recorded for Decca Records, was not allowed into the country. Other political calypsos were banned for alleged obscenity, including "Rats in Town."

The laws were not amended until 1951 when a legislator named Raymond Quevedo, who also happened to sing calypso under the name "Atila the Hun," spoke eloquently on behalf of the calypsonian, ridiculing censorship:

The police heard sung the calypso: "Nettie, Nettie, gie me de ting you have in your belly."
And they wanted the words changed to:
"Nettie, Nettie, gie me the article you have in your abdomen."

Atila also pointed out that if the same standards were applied to literature that were applied to kaiso, there would be no Shakespeare, Boccaccio, Voltaire or Villon in the libraries. Although censorship was not overturned entirely, the laws were changed. The censors laid off.

America went Calypso crazy for the first time in the mid-1930s. The Trinidadian stars Atila the Hun and Roaring Lion traveled to New York to record calypsos, where their sessions were attended by such stars as

Bing Crosby and Rudy Vallee. (Perhaps not unlike Mick Jagger dropping in on reggae singers in the 1970s.) Among the tunes recorded was Roaring Lion's "Ugly Woman."

"If you want to be happy and live a king's life
Never make a pretty woman your wife
All you've got to do is just what I say
And you'll always be happy and gay
From a logical point of view
Always marry a woman uglier than you."

The song was the sensation of New York. (It was also a hit for an artist in the mid-'60s, named Jimmy Soul, and was redone in the '80s by Kid Creole and the Coconuts.) Rudy Vallee flipped and put the Roaring Lion on his coast-to-coast radio show. Calypso would never stay at home again.

Roaring Lion himself was a master of wit and he took on Trinidadian snobbishness and wordiness with his song, "Asteroid."

"Asteroid exegetically
Heterogeneous metaphysically
Well to equivocate your equilibrium
You must accept my ultimatum
For I'm a man of psychology
And I can always sing grammatically."

Trinidadians call steel-drum music "pan." A steel drum is a pan. Supposedly the first pans were literally frying pans. Oil was discovered in Trinidad in 1866 and in the 20th century that oil came to be packed in steel barrels. Somebody discovered that the barrels made musical tones when struck and that, with some customizing, one steel barrel-head could produce a whole range of tones. I don't know when pan really caught on, but by the 1940s it was an institution.

The first eight-note steel drum was made by Winston "Spree" Simon in 1940. But, Carnival was banned from 1939 to 1945 because of the war, and when victory in Europe was announced on May 6, 1945, thousands of steel drums came out of the woodwork and into the streets. It was the first new musical instrument since the invention of the saxophone.

Since its invention, the steel drum has been popular throughout the world. In Trinidad, it's an institution, but mainly a non-profit institution these days. Americans tend to think of steel drums as charming instruments that play light, lilting tropical melodies or amus-



ing versions of the classics. But once you've danced to a steel band you know that they make serious dance music.

Calypso enjoyed its second wave of American popularity during and after World War Two.

American troops returning from the Caribbean brought calypso back with them. By the mid-'50s it had moved into the mainstream of American pop music, mainly through the great success of Harry Belafonte. Other American pop stars began recording calypsos. Robert Mitchum, who spent a lot of time in Trinidad, recorded a calypso album and the natives are still talking about it.

However, few Americans were exposed to the real calypso made by such artists as Mighty Sparrow, Lord Pretender and Lord Kitchener. It was wild, shockingly frank, witty and topical. Most Americans consider the Trinidadian patois an entirely foreign language. Still, they liked the beat.

Then in the '70s reggae took off, and interest was focused on Caribbean culture. Reggae was exotic. Calypso seemed a bit old-fashioned. But slowly it began to catch on. Maybe it was its natural high energy, and wild and crazy beat. Adventurous rock-club DJs began spinning calypsos and found that dancers loved them, particularly those with outrageous but understandable lyrics. Like the one Mighty Sparrow sang: "The Shah of Iran is a wanted man." Or that old favorite: "Who put the pepper in the vaseline?"

Reggae was confrontational. Calypso was slyly subversive. Once again, it appeared that calypso might get hip, especially with the driving new beat called "soca."

The term soca came into use about 10 years ago—to distinguish what was happening on the modern calypso scene from "Yellow Bird" and Harry Belafonte in a straw hat. Soca is a little bit of soul and a little bit of calypso—soul calypso. It's got what calypso has always had, and an upbeat beat. Supposedly, the name "soca" was invented by a six-foot, four-inch singer named Lord Shorty, who has since changed his name to Ras Shorty-I.

According to Ras Shorty-I: "Soca is calypso. It's the nucleus of calypso, the soul. I felt it needed something brand new, to hit everyone like a thunderbolt. What I was doing was incorporating soul with calypso, but I didn't want to say 'soul calypso' or 'calypsoul.' So I came up with the name 'soca.'"

Most of the great calypsos might now fall under the name "soca," and one of the greatest tunes now on the calypso hit parade is Mighty Sparrow's "Soca pressure."

Next Carnival will be the 30th anniversary of Sparrow's first winning the Calypso Monarch and Road March King titles. The man is like James Brown. He's unstoppable; he's still on top. Among the most popular calypsos in the world now is Sparrow's "Vanessa," about one Miss America's adventures with a magazine:

"Sexy Vanessa, I hope you understand
I love the picture and I'm still your greatest fan
I'm upset with you and I'm jealous, I'll admit
Not for what you do but cause it's not me
you do it with."

This year the calypso finalists were: Penguin (last year's Monarch); Merchant; Johnny King; Luta; Gypsy; Blue Boy; Singing Francine; and Black Stalin (who won in 1979). Each finalist performed two calypsos, accompanied by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Band, and The Trinidad and Tobago Regiment Band, probably the hippest police and military bands in the world.

What was amazing about the performances was that almost every number resembled a live version of an MTV video. The songs were accompanied by dramatic skits, many with quite a crowd of performers on the big stage, acting out the songs.

Blue Boy, who has won Road March King three times (a title won by having a song performed by the most marching bands), went all-out in the calypso

finals, dressing in full combat camouflage and carrying a dummy machine gun. In the middle of his song he was ambushed by a white kid in combat fatigues, who appeared to symbolize the US forces attacking Grenada. Whatever it symbolized, it was fun and the firecrackers going off on the big stage might have been dynamite as far as the crowd was concerned.

Merchant did a Caribbean solidarity number and marched on stage with a whole train of Rastafarians, each wearing a banner with the name of an island on it: Trinidad, Tobago, Grenada, Barbados, Jamaica, Cuba etcetera. The dreadlocks skanked around behind Merchant, flaunting their banners like beauty contestants. The presence of Cuba and Grenada might have contained some controversial subtleties, but I couldn't tell. I noticed that neither Haiti nor Puerto Rico were represented.

Rastafarians are definitely a presence in Trinidad and in calypso music. The 1985 Calypso Monarch, Black Stalin, is a rasta who wears his locks up under a big black hat. The winning songs were "Ism Schism" and "Dorothy Wait." "Ism Schism" warned against Trinidad being torn apart by politics in the manner of Grenada, and "Dorothy Wait," which was a reaction to the wild sexuality often involved in calypso, told Dorothy that their jamming would have to wait until some economic and political wrongs were corrected.

Meanwhile, out in the streets, almost every band was dancing wildly to "Suck Me, Soucouyant" by a singer named Crazy. This wild soca was being played everywhere by live bands, on tapes and records. It was blasting out of televisions, pouring out of windows. Dancers were wildly jumping on the refrain, "suck me, suck me!" Of course, a soucouyant is some kind of mythical creature somewhere between a vampire and a ball of fire, so the song is not literally sexual—but imaginations are not caught by what's literal, and this song captured the wild imagination of a nation.

Sometimes insight just comes along and hits you on the head. That's how it was when I was sitting in the grandstand watching the Calypso competition. The huge grandstand was filled with natives and tourists of all races—blacks and whites talking to each other and having fun. Rastas came down the aisles in their huge tams, hawking Carib beer and Coca Cola. Sitting in front of me were two couples of retirement age. It appeared that it was a white husband and a black wife, and a black husband and a white wife, although maybe they were just sitting mixed for fun. But both guys were wearing classic Hawaiian shirts and having a ball, and the ladies were decked in fab costume jewelry and on the town. I don't remember clearly who was singing at the time, but I noticed that everybody in the stands was into the song and the music and the performance. Right in front of the stage was a barechested Rasta wildly waving his long locks, and in front of me, the old black retiree was nodding his head in calypso time—as into it as the dread—and the old white retiree was tapping his foot. And it hit me! This is a culture. This is a national culture. This is what it's all about.

Can you imagine going to a concert with your grandparents and everyone having a great time? If not, maybe that's what's wrong with the United States.

In Trinidad, people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds find themselves quite capable of letting go and having fun. In Trinidad, young people find themselves enjoying music regardless of the musicians making it. It's a culture. There's no generation gap. There's no credibility gap. Even "Suck Me, Soucouyant" was enjoyed by youngsters and oldsters. And when Arrow sang, "Raise your hand if you want to jam," everybody raised their hand.

Everybody in the whole country prepares elaborately all year for two days of craziness. Trinidad is not at war. They are not in an arms race. Who's going to worry about multiple-warhead cruise missiles when you've only got 10 more months to build a 20-foot pelican that can be worn on your back? Trinidadians would rather dance with you than fight with you. ☺



Raphael de Leon, the "Grandfather of Calypso," started singing in 1927 and is the oldest living Calypsonian (bottom pg. 42); Leroy Caliste, better known as Black Stalin, won the Calypso Monarch title in 1985 and is considered the best calypso commentator on social and political issues (above left); calypso bands rehearsing for competition shows (top right, pg. 45); Slinger Francisco, legendary as "The Might Sparrow," has won numerous titles and no longer competes to allow others a chance. This year he had everyone jumping in the streets with "Vanessa," a spicy song about the deposed beauty queen who appeared in *Penthouse* magazine (bottom).



HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLVES

Los Lobos
finally break into
the open

Article by Chris Morris

Paul Nollin



A y-yi-yi-yi!" The *grito*—that cross between ■ whoop, a laugh and a howl that punctuates Mexican-American music—used to be heard only at Latino weddings, during mariachi performances, or in Chicano dance halls. But times have changed; the *grito* now rings out in America's best-known rock clubs and concert halls, for Los Lobos are on the prowl.

The Lobos, veterans of more than 10 years on the Chicano music circuit in East Los Angeles, have moved beyond the barrio and into the mainstream of American rock 'n' roll. The band's music—a stylistic enchilada of rockabilly, blues, R&B, country, and traditional Tex-Mex—is this year's electric hot sauce, and it has set fire to the jaded musical palates of fans and critics alike.

The sudden success of the Lobos' many-faceted rock has left the band members themselves satisfied, surprised, and more than a bit exhausted.

"When I look back, I don't think we really had ■ 1984," Cesar Rosas, the rotund, goateed singer and guitarist of Los Lobos, says wistfully. "I think we missed that year or something. Somebody stole it."

Rosas scoops his year-old daughter Ruby into his arms as she makes a grab at my tape recorder. Seated next to Rosas, David Hidalgo, the Lobos' serene co-vocalist and guitarist, nods wearily in agreement.

Rosas and Hidalgo, both dedicated family men, are evidently struggling to come to terms with their imminent departure. The next day at midnight, Los Lobos—Rosas, Hidalgo, bassist Conrad Lozano, drummer Louie Perez and saxophonist Steve Berlin—will leave on the latest leg of a seemingly endless American tour.

Yet, as fatigued as they plainly are, and as reluctant as they are to leave their families (Hidalgo and Perez's wives are expecting babies in the spring), Los Lobos realize that this isn't the time to stay at home.

Last March, the band won a Grammy (their first), for Best Mexican-American Performance (for "Anselma," a track from their EP . . . and a time to dance). The group divided the rest of 1984 between the road, where they played nearly 200 concert dates, and the recording studio. The resulting LP, *How Will the Wolf Survive?*, wound up battling it out with Prince and Bruce Springsteen at the top of year-end critics' polls and breaking into the *Billboard* Top 50. The days when Los Lobos' hottest gig was playing acoustic versions of Mexican folk songs at Johnny's Shrimp Boat in East LA are a thing of the past.

For the quartet of thirtyish Chicanos who founded Los Lobos, and their Jewish, Philadelphia-bred sax man, success has come suddenly and perhaps unexpectedly. But, as Rosas explains, the band's story began a dozen years ago, in a series of informal get-togethers in living rooms not unlike the one we are sitting in on Los Angeles' largely Hispanic East Side.

"It was real casual—it wasn't planned or nothing," Rosas says. "We met every night. Everybody pulled out acoustic guitars and started learning a song, saying 'Yeah, I remember this Mexican song I used to hear on the radio,' or 'My mom used to play this.' It was like ■ skiffle group—a Mexican bluegrass group."

Los Lobos Del Este De Los Angeles (as they were originally known) were formed from a nucleus of junior high school pals: Rosas and Hidalgo, and Frank Con-

zales (most recently the music director for El Teatro Campesino's production *Corridos*). The lineup was completed by Perez, who played in Rosas' band East Company, and by Lozano, a fellow student at East LA's Garfield High and ■ member of the preeminent East Side group, Tierra. Although all of the members have experience in rock bands and knowledge of such illustrious Chicano precursors as Richie Valens, The Midnights, and Cannibal and the Headhunters, Los Lobos began in 1973 as an acoustic group playing string-band music from Mexico and some other Latin and Caribbean cultures.

"We used to play the *jarocho* music," Hidalgo recalls. "We started off with mandolins—two mandolins, two guitars, and ■ *guitarrón* (a Mexican acoustic bass guitar) or upright bass. We'd play all the violin parts on mandolins. We had the whole group real traditional-sounding."

"We were appealing to East LA in the beginning, but then we started going out of town a little bit more, doing the college circuits," Rosas continues. "We were making a pretty good living playing colleges and festivals, doing folk music, but then there were a lot of cutbacks, and there was no money for schools anymore."

In desperation, the Lobos, now ■ quartet with the departure of Gonzales, began the part of their career that Rosas refers to as "a slow death": hiring themselves out to restaurants on the East Side. This epoch lasted from the mid '70s through the early '80s.

"You gotta hear this tape," Rosas says. He rises and runs into another room, returning with ■ cassette of 1979-80 vintage that he pops into ■ machine on the

living room table. As Los Lobos grind out a slow, sodden beat, a very drunk, ancient Mexican customer joins them on the refrain of the folk tune "Volver, Volver." At the conclusion of the song, the band, without missing a beat, lunges into "Purple Haze."

Rosas and Hidalgo roar with laughter.

"Being sick of the job, we started taking electric guitars and fooling around with them to make ourselves happy," Rosas explains. "Little by little, we started playing more electric, playing rock 'n' roll again, and we started getting real excited about it."

It would be a while before Los Lobos would play electric instruments before a Hollywood audience. In late 1979, just prior to the debut of their self-released, all-acoustic folk LP, *Just Another Band from East L.A.* (now out of print), the group made a short but disastrous LA appearance, opening for Public Image Limited at Olympic Auditorium. The Lobos' set (secured for them by Tito Larriba of the Plugz, an East LA-based punk band also on the bill) was greeted by a rain of projectiles.

Despite this unpromising beginning, Los Lobos began to explore the Hollywood club scene. One motivator was the advent of the Blasters, today the reigning roots-oriented band in Los Angeles. The raw blues and rockabilly-influenced American music of that group suggested some new possibilities to their East LA blood brothers.

"Dave bought this record one day," Rosas says. "I was over at his house and he said, 'Man, listen to this!' It was the Blasters' first album on Rollin' Rock, and we just flipped."

"We thought there might be room for us out there somewhere," Hidalgo adds. "We had a feeling that, with what Ry Cooder and Sir Douglas had done, what we were doing wasn't far from that. And the Blasters were happening already."

The Lobos struck up a friendship with the like-minded Blasters, and before long the East Siders were bringing their electric set into Hollywood clubs like the Whisky A Go Go and the Cathay de Grande as an opening act. By this time, Hidalgo had received a button accordion as a gift from a musician's widow, and Rosas was working his *bajo sexto* (a fat-bodied Mexican 12-string guitar) into the act. The Lobos began to devote a significant part of their set to brawling versions of jubilant polkas originally performed by the *norteño conjuntos* of such border accordionists as Narciso Martinez and Santiago Jimenez.

"We'd always been aware of the music, but we couldn't play the songs," Rosas says of the salty border music that is now a mainstay of the band's sound. "We always wanted to play it, for years, but we couldn't reproduce the sound. Earlier, we even played a few of those songs with *bajo* and harmonica."

The Lobos set—an energetic mixture of Richie Valens covers, bounding Tex-Mex dance tunes, R&B and blues covers, and rocking originals—created a minor sensation on the jaded LA club scene. Even members of the die-hard punk community were responding to the group's bilingual boogie.

"All of a sudden we were playing at the Whisky," Rosas says, "and it felt good, you know. I'm not saying that we never had that, but they really accepted what we were doing. Changing musical styles and presenting it to somebody new went over really well. All the punks and purple-hair people were jumping around."

Flushed with the reaction to their refreshing sound, the Lobos cut two homemade singles in 1980 and '81—45s that balanced traditional Mexican folk ("Volver, Volver," "Anselma") with more up-to-date, yet still rootsy, rock 'n' roll (covers of the Drifters' "Under the Boardwalk," and the Premiers' East LA party classic, "Farmer John"). It wasn't until 1983, however, that Los Lobos, their local reputation cemented, were signed by Slash Records, the nationally-distributed independent whose roster includes the Blasters, Rank and File, and other bedrock-styled American bands. The EP, . . . and a time to dance, produced by singer-songwriter T-Bone Burnett and Steve Berlin (then still a member of the Blasters' horn section), captures the relaxed, yet tough



Bradford Branson

and assured, sound that won the Lobos their broad local following.

The group's orientation changed in the year between the EP and *How Will the Wolf Survive?* First, Berlin left the Blasters to become a permanent member of Los Lobos, and its sole non-Hispanic. "We're an equal opportunity employer," Hidalgo says with a laugh.

Even more importantly, Los Lobos' music deepened suddenly and dramatically. The good-time, danceable rock 'n' roll with which the band first made their mark is still apparent in such tracks as "Don't Worry Baby," "I Got to Let You Know," and a cover of Peppermint Harris's "I Got Loaded." But, for the first time, the band addresses Hispanic culture directly in their lyrics. "A Matter of Time" is a touching ballad in which an undocumented worker bids farewell to his wife before creeping across the border to seek work, while "Will the Wolf Survive?" is an anthem for the band ("lobos," of course, meaning "wolves") and for the Chicano community as a whole.

"When we finished the EP, we started thinking that we wanted to say something," Hidalgo explains. "We wanted to put out something that was gonna count."

"Will the Wolf Survive?" came into being almost by accident, as the recording sessions for the album neared completion. "We needed one more song—we needed something, but we didn't know what it was," Hidalgo recounts. "Louie was looking through a *National Geographic* and found the article 'How Will the Wolf Survive?' And he flipped the page, and there was another story that fit right in with it. There was a picture of this gaunt old guy who was hitchhiking on the highway with

Veterans of more than 10 years on the music circuit in Los Angeles: (L to R) Steve Berlin, Conrad Lozano, David Hidalgo, Cesar Rosas, Louis Perez.

his dog. There it was."

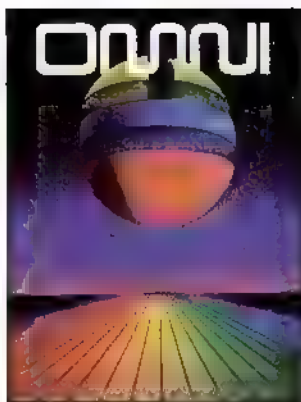
It's unsurprising that "Will the Wolf Survive?" took shape in such a natural, almost automatic way. It's a song Los Lobos have been writing in their heads for 12 years. Los Lobos have endured—and the hard-won lessons of more than a decade of playing are now being transferred, practically without effort, into their vibrant music.

Today, the Lobos are hometown heroes who can sell out two consecutive nights at Hollywood's glitzy concert-hall showcase, The Palace; they're also drawing similarly large houses around the country. Wherever they play, people press against the stage to shake their moneymakers, as the band ranges through a repertoire that encompasses Richie Valens' "Come On Let's Go," the Chicano waltz "Serenata Norteno," and Howlin' Wolf's "300 Pounds of Joy."

But the question persists: Will Los Lobos' success last? I ask Rosas if their music is perceived as a novelty by sensation-hungry critics and audiences, to be consumed today and discarded tomorrow.

"I think at first they thought we were a novelty," he replies, stroking his goatee with thumb and index finger. "I think we broke out of that somehow, and I'm glad. I think they finally realized, 'Hey, these guys are coming back. They're here again.'"

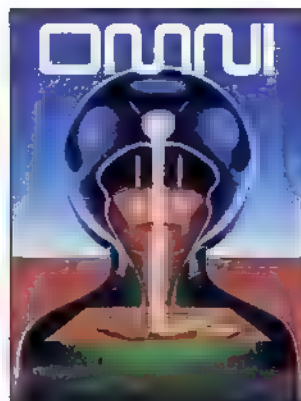
Rosas smiles a lupine smile—the grin of one who knows he'll be back again and again.



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NEW SOUNDS



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He won an Oscar, but refused to accept it. He hates tours, talk shows and interviews. He lives and works like an eccentric recluse—and he's brilliant. His name is Vangelis.

Column by John Schaefer

"I've always been anti-success," says Vangelis. "Normally, after the success of *Chariots of Fire*, I would have immediately rushed to the States and started doing a big number with video programs, tours and concerts and such. I didn't do any of that." He didn't even pick up his Academy Award for the *Chariots* film score. He has never toured in the United States, and until last year had never even been to this country. The Greek-born, London-based musician is one of the best known creators of electronic music today. Yet despite his commercial success—or perhaps because of it—his most remarkable achievement has been his ability to keep a low profile.

But *Chariots* was everywhere and, as a result, Vangelis has become at least a household half-name. "Vangelis Papathanassiou" probably wouldn't become a household name no matter what he did. Knowing an obstacle when he smashed into one, Vangelis ditched his lengthy last name in the early '70s.

However, if *Chariots* made his name more popular, Vangelis himself is still a shadowy figure. He hasn't cultivated success. When the Oscar-winning *Chariots of Fire* soundtrack placed him in the limelight, Van-

gelis was shocked. "Nobody believed the film would be so successful," he recalls. "When I wrote the score, I didn't write it to be number one; I did it because I liked the people I was working with. It was a very humble, low-budget film."

Vangelis has refused to fall into any of the superficial categories applied to music. By the time he won the Academy Award in 1981, he had been working in films and on discs for over a decade, building a sizable following among fans of both rock and electronic music (who are not necessarily the same people). The sheer diversity of styles he's explored, and his refusal to stand in one musical place, make him the quintessential "new sounds" composer. His music inhabits a world that is not quite rock (though his earliest support came from rock fans), not really classical (despite the lush, almost symphonic quality of his synthesizers), and certainly not jazz (even if he does employ improvisation).

Vangelis has recorded more than 20 albums, the latest of which is *Mask*. He has been recording since his days with the Greek rock band Aphrodite's Child in the late '60s. Leaving his troubled homeland in 1968, Vangelis moved to Paris, where Aphrodite's Child made three albums. Unknown in America, their records sold over 20 million copies in Europe.

While in Paris, Vangelis met the talented French television director Frederic Rossif, for whom he composed a number of film scores. Finding the glare of pop success too uncomfortable, he began in 1970 to pursue a solo career. He moved to London and opened Nemo Studios, from which he has rarely emerged during the past decade. "Music for me is life," he says. "I stay in my studio until ten or eleven at night and I record every day. Not for money or for albums—I just compose music."

The wild diversity of the sounds that have come out of his studio is often startling. "When I'm successful in one field, I don't stay with that, because I don't want to become a prisoner of any label, any image." The result is a series of records in a wide variety of moods: he can play an unusual but recognizably rock-based piece, or just take off for outer space—often on the same album. Usually it works, as in *Albedo 0.39* and *Heaven and Hell*. Occasionally it doesn't, as in *Spiral*.

In the 1970s came Vangelis's fire-and-ice period: the celestial sounds of synthesizers, bells, and chimes contrasted sharply with the stampings of percussion and organ, and the rich waves of a chanting choir on *Heaven and Hell*. Recorded in 1975, *H&H* features the voice of Yes' lead singer Jon Anderson. When Rick Wakeman split that group, Vangelis was recruited to take his place. But after several weeks of rehearsals, Vangelis was convinced that his musical direction and the group's were a universe apart. Still, he and Anderson became friends, and recorded three albums together. "We went into the studio one day and started playing," he says, "and a year after that we released the album. But we didn't start out to record an album; it was just the pleasure of playing together."

Since 1970, when Vangelis unveiled his lush, dreamy style with the film score *L'Apocalypse des Animaux*, his name has become synonymous with music of direct emotional appeal. But he wouldn't be Vangelis if he limited himself to one mood: the Ignacio soundtrack is often chilling and sinister, with dirge-like choral effects and rumblings from a synthesizer or thundersheet; on *Albedo 0.39*, Vangelis creates a lighter mood—there are even a couple of pieces you can dance to (well, sort of).

Since *Chariots*, he has been cautious about the movies. "I don't want to become a factory of film music," he says. He turned down an offer to write music for 2010, but did score *Blade Runner* and a Japanese film, *Antarctica*.

It's not difficult to see why Vangelis has become a popular musician in this field: Using layers of music, both electronic and acoustic, he is brilliant at setting a mood, whether that of running through the English countryside, braving the seamy underbelly of post-

Apocalypse Los Angeles, or exploring the frozen wastes of Antarctica. As U2's Bono Vox told SPIN last month, "He's got a real emotion to his music." Although he is a virtuoso synthesizer player, and can make one keyboard magically imitate a drum or a harpsichord, Vangelis's albums never degenerate into showoff displays of hardware. Vangelis skillfully walks that fine line between possessing a distinctive style and becoming a self-parody, which accounts for his musical longevity, and his reclusive work habits enable him to avoid the pressure to repeat his successes. He avoids talk shows. What you're now reading is one of his rare interviews. "When you compose music, that's one thing," he says. "But when you have to explain it, that's much more difficult." He doesn't tour, though he enjoys playing for people (he punctuates his conversation with bits of music from one of the keyboards he always has nearby). "I don't believe in playing in each town, and saying, 'OK, this is my new album—can you buy my new album, please?' I don't like to be pushy, though I like to perform." The problem, he says, is that "a concert or any public performance is a responsible gesture. It's not for serving a promotional purpose or boosting a performer's ego. Worst of all is this obligation to have a full house."

In his own "anti-success" fashion, Vangelis has become a highly regarded musician. His studio recordings have been critically and commercially successful. His early 1985 release, *Invisible Connections*, is an atonal, experimental piece (released on the prestigious German "classical-music" label, Deutsche Grammophon). He wrote a ballet score in 1983 for a Greek production of *Elektra*. But he's still wary of success. Two pirate albums appeared in 1980 and '81 under his name. They were a transparent attempt to cash in on his sudden fame; the music was from a 1971 jam session—and a bad one, Vangelis admits. The tapes were taken, signatures forged, and two albums, *Dragon* and *Hypothesis*, made from them. Be warned: they're awful. "Greed can destroy the world," he says. "This person was greedy and just wanted to make some money. Although we won the case in court, the albums were already out, and I don't agree with that music at all."

Dodging the spotlight has allowed Vangelis to develop a unique style. But it has also led to some misconceptions. One is that he uses the latest in studio technology to the exclusion of everything else. In fact, he plays a number of acoustic instruments, and features a choir on his newest album, *Mask*. Other recordings make use of the flugelhorn, acoustic piano and violin. "I don't always play synthesizers," Vangelis explains. "I play acoustic instruments with the same pleasure. I'm happy when I have unlimited choice; in order to do that, you need everything from simple acoustic sounds to electronic sounds."

The other common misconception is that Vangelis is primarily a composer of film scores. But his last three albums have all been studio recordings; film music accounts for only a quarter of the albums he has produced.

Vangelis has released three albums in the past 12 months. *Soil Festivities*, released in late 1984, was his first domestic release since *Chariots of Fire* in 1981. He feels he still has a lot to say—in his music, at least. Now he's using a more complex, almost symphonic language: *Soil Festivities* and *Mask* are arranged like symphonies or suites, divided into movements that present a wide array of moods. *Mask* is a dramatic, exciting work in six movements. In the fourth part, some complex percussion, strongly reminiscent of West African tribal drumming, gives the piece an exotic flavor; in the opening movement, Vangelis creates a flourish of sound on the keyboard, using a quick series of notes to propel the chorus and synthesizers into a crashing climax that would've done Richard Wagner proud.

"It's very easy to go out of balance and to become a product," he warns. "But music is so much more than entertainment, believe me. It's an important human possession."



BILLY JOEL

TALKS BACK

Billy Joel is a superstar and a superwimp. He's middle-of-the-road, and maybe over-the-hill. Some find him innocuous and others think he's absurd. But he's no fool, as you will see in the following exclusive interview.

Interview by
Barry Millmont

Billy Joel on Billy Joel

I'm Billy Joel-ed out. I'm not that self-horny. I did interviews for years and years and I'm just not interested in them anymore. I find that analyzing my work isn't worthwhile. I don't get anything out of it. And if I don't want to talk about my work, then people ask me about my personal life. And I don't want to do that either, because it's one of the few things I have left that's my own.

Personal Life

Even if you don't talk to the press, it doesn't stop them. If they don't have anything to write about, they make it up. I'm here to tell you, everything you've ever read about me and Christie's all bullshit. Absolute, total, unadulterated bullshit. Except that we got married. What really sucks is that the crap that's written about us really hurts her a lot. They say mean things about her, and she takes it bad; about how her boyfriend died, and she immediately ran off with me. That's not what happened. She doesn't even talk about it to me, so there's no way they know what the facts are. They have us going to all these nightspots in New York. We never go to nightspots. I never go to discos. We hardly ever go out, period. They have us riding motorcycles together. She hates motorcycles. She doesn't want to have anything to do with them. It's like Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor to them, or something. Like, gimme a break already.

Going Out

When I was 17, myself, used to go hitting the local bars—just pop up on stage and jam a little. With me and Christie together, though, it's like



double jeopardy. We don't ever get a chance to sit and observe anything, or to have any kind of situation that's real, because all you're doing is signing autographs; everybody's staring at you. It makes me real uncomfortable. People ask me if I've changed since I've become successful. It's not so much that I've changed as people's reaction to me that's changed. So my reaction to them has to change, too. I can't be real. I can't go out, have a couple drinks and get loose. Then everybody goes, "Oh man, look, he's bombed!" Or they think I'm doing drugs. If I want to go to an amusement park, I can't. I get paranoid after awhile, with everyone looking at me, and it becomes an artificial situation. So I have to give that up.

Lies

When we do go out, we try our best to avoid photographers. One time they managed to corner us, so we



decided to be nice and give them what they wanted, this sort of hammy pose, figuring this is the kind of junk they have us doing all the time, anyway. And they go and put some bullshit caption under it, like, here we are putting on happy faces for the camera in the midst of an argument. They make up this stuff. It's all baloney. It's all lies. And it makes me wonder about everything else I read. I mean, if they can do that to me, not that I'm so important, what kinds of lies are they printing about the Russians, you know? You just stop believing everything you read.

Selling Out

Whenever I do interviews, people take me out of context; they misquote me. Sometimes the guy would have the story written before he even meets me. He just wants a few quickie quotes, and then I read it, and it's a hatchet job. The guy would be nice and friendly to my face, "Thank you, Mr. Joel, I really appreciate your time," then—bam!—he cuts my balls off. It makes you mistrust people, makes you suspicious. And I don't want to become one of those celebrities who becomes a recluse and lives in a prison. I'm battling to retain my faith in people. "He's gone commercial," they write. "He sold out," they write. You see it everywhere,

and you start to doubt yourself. "Have I?" you wonder. If you read it often enough, it does that to you. They've had a field day with me.

Fame

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not crying about all this. I do have certain privileges other people don't have, because I make money and I'm well-known. A lot of people want those kinds of things. Sometimes it helps. If I want to get a seat in a crowded restaurant, I tell them my name, and it's like, "No problem, Mr. Joel. Here you go." On the other hand, there are plenty of drawbacks. I can't have a quiet conversation with my girlfriend, 'cause they always want to take my picture. And if I don't let 'em, I'm a snob. Autograph hounds keep interrupting me, so I never get to complete a thought. It's really weird. I'm always confronted with that whenever I try to go out. I don't think I'll ever get to make my peace with it. It's forced me to change my lifestyle.

I have to move from where I live, it's gotten so bad. I live on the water, and every weekend there are 200 boats with zoom lenses looking right in my bedroom window. I can't lay out in my own backyard. I can't stay there. I've got to move to a more remote area. They climb over the wall, for Chrissake. I don't want to live like Elvis Presley, with my own personal Mafia around and guard dogs protecting me and stuff. I'll never get used to that. I'm from Hicksville, man, not Beverly Hills.

Politics

I remember I went to the No Nukes concert at the Nassau Coliseum and had a big argument with James Taylor about that. I agreed with him about a nuclear freeze, but I told him he was wasting his time because he was playing to the people who already agreed with him. A farmer in Kansas doesn't trust rock 'n' roll musicians, and a show like that is more apt to alienate him than get him to see your point of view. I think music has more of an international political implication. It's an international language, and we all react to it emotionally. When the Russians hear *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber, they cry their eyes out. He's an American, and here's this American's music reducing them to tears. That's subversive politics, man. That's infiltration.

Anti-Politics

I'm approached constantly by politicians to do benefits or support them or endorse them, but I don't have anything to do with them. I've discovered the hard way that politicians will use you in ways you could never imagine. You shake hands with a mayor someplace and, before you know it, there are pictures of the two of you all over the place saying you support him. I don't trust them on principle, because by the very nature of their job they compromise too easily and too often. I believe in some of them more than

others. But I realize that, no matter who's in power, I'm still going to be trying to beat the system. So what's the point in the big scheme of things, you know? There's no real difference between them. I'm still not going to know any more about that Russian guy than I did under the last administration. Jimmy Carter wanted me to help him out in '80. When I checked into it, though, I found out he wanted me to support a whole string of other people along with him, people I didn't even know. I said, "No way." And besides, who gives a shit what I think? I'm just a rock star. I'm not a great political thinker. Why should I get on a soapbox? I don't have the answers and neither do they. That's why I'm in rock 'n' roll. 'Cause I don't have the answers. I don't believe in politics anymore. I believe in people.

Nylon Curtain

There's all this paranoia about the Russians. I know this guy, my age, a neighbor of mine. I want to reach him, to get across to him that I want to know about him, what he's really like. Musically, I can do that. We're so cut off from the rest of the world that merely bringing people closer together is a really radical change. The title of my album, *Nylon Curtain*, meant just that. The Russians have an Iron Curtain and we have a nylon one. It's this very sheer, capitalist haze we all seem to have. Everything looks so rosy through it, so unreal. Making contact with another nation based on something other than what you read in the papers, or what some politician tells us, that's radical.

Videos

I hate them, hate doing them. I only do them because I have to promote my records one way or another. It's part of my contract, but I never enjoyed it. Still, I'd rather do a video than go all over the country, meeting every rack-jobber and record retailer, visiting every little radio station that plays my records. I never could handle that end of the business. You never know who you're talking to most of the time, which bugs the hell out of me. So I just do a video and, bingo, my end of the bargain is kept. I know they've got to be done, though, so I do try to make them good. It sucks, really, because I'm not a camera-oriented person, so there's no enjoyment in it for me. I feel there's a danger with videos in taking away the listener's imagination. I think most of them are stupid, including some of mine. I did one for "She's Right On Time," which is this sort of Christmas song that, if I'd done it literally, would've been too cornball. So I tried to do it funny, which was even worse. I should've left it corny.

Uptown Girl

"Uptown Girl" I wasn't too crazy about, because they wanted me to dance. I sort of said, OK, you know, I'll give it a try. We shot it on the two hottest days of the year. We were down on the

Bowery, and all these bums kept butting in with "A-a-ay Cri-i-ist-a-ay!" They wouldn't leave her alone. It was a real drag. It wasn't my idea to put her in it in the first place, either. It was the production people's. I was against it from the beginning, even though they said she'd be perfect for it. I didn't want my personal life brought into it, but she was a good sport about the whole thing. She was great in it 'cause she's used to cameras. But I kept wincing, turning away from the camera.

The more I watch videos, the more I'm put off by them. The abstract ones aren't too terrible, but more and more you're seeing the girl in high heels and a garter belt, with hints of ultraviolence, dogs barking and monsters and crap. It's getting depressing, and I resent it. That's just the way the system works nowadays, I'm afraid. I'm going to be doing less and less of them if I can help it.

Growing Up

There's nothing wrong with growing up. It's growing old that worries me. The only album I ever aimed at a specific age group was *The Nylon Curtain*, where I was writing the songs as a character my own age. I was 32, a postwar baby-boomer. I was going through a lot of changes; a lot of people I knew were going through the same changes. And it reflected itself clearly on the record. There's a purpose to growing up. Back in

the '60s, everything was youth-oriented. The Pepsi Generation, right? And lately I've gotten to thinking how your youth is such a short period of time, say 12 to 30. It's such a short segment in the overall span of your entire lifetime. Why is everything concentrated on it, directed at it? Why are all the sales pitches aimed toward it? The majority of your life is spent at a different age, and I think songwriting should be flexible enough to encompass all ages. Be able to communicate any wisdom you've acquired from all the mistakes you've made. It's good to make mistakes, I found out. Your mistakes are sometimes the only truly original things you do. Nobody makes the same mistakes you do. Your accidents are totally original creations.

Falling on My Face

I've actually written things that began with me putting something down and then saying to myself, "Wait a minute. That's not right. That's not how it's supposed to sound." Then I live with it awhile and actually get to like it. Of course, there are certain songs I've done that I absolutely cringe at when I hear them. There's always something on every album where I try to be daring and just fall on my face. It's not that I was slacking off or anything. There just always seems to be a glaring mistake like that on every album I do. It's because I push myself too far, I think. But if

you never tread dangerous ground, you'll never break new ground. You always have to be right on that edge, or else you just wind up recycling yourself.

My Records

I've never had a concept of what I sound like. I can never compare myself to other artists. *Turnstiles*, I think, had a certain sound. The albums before that, though, *Streetlife* and *Piano Man*—I can't stand listening to them. The tone of my voice, the production; they're all so self-indulgent. On *Streetlife*, I was trying too hard to write like Debussy. It was all so arty and undisciplined. I think I was lulled into that California state of mind, which was a big mistake for a native New Yorker like me.

California

I only went out to the coast to clear up some business and wound up staying three damned years. The weather was nice, the rent was low, everybody was easy to get along with. Then I woke up one day and screamed, "What the hell am I doing here? I'm from New York!" LA is very seductive. Like, wow, man. Views of the Pacific, palm trees, sports cars, everybody's beautiful. The whole fuckin' town is full of gorgeous people. Everybody who thinks they're pretty moves out to LA to become a movie star. But after a while it's like, where's the crap; you know?

I need some variation. There's no winter. No contrast. It's too hypnotic. I'm not putting down California. Native Californians are good people, very welcoming. The real rats are the ex-New Yorkers who go there and rip it off. They're the real creeps, the Fagans. They're just there to rape it. I didn't want to be one of them.

I didn't want to feed off anybody. I finally realized you can't identify with what's current or what happens to be hip at the moment, because it'll disappear before long and then you're up shit's creek. I try not to sound current musically. As a matter of fact, if there happens to be a strong trend at the moment, I try to go the other way. Trends come and go, but music can be timeless.

Satisfaction

Everybody's always told me I'd never amount to anything. My teachers, landlords, so-called friends, everybody. But now that I have, I don't feel any vengeance. I never depended on revenge for any sort of satisfaction, although the possibilities abound. I've always been able to make myself happy. About the only way I can't please myself is when it comes to relationships with women. Nothing can replace that. You can try, but all that happens then is that your right hand gets worn out.

Assuming you're right-handed, that is.



Paul Norton

PENTHOUSE

A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a light blue strapless top. She is holding a hair dryer to her hair, and the hair is blowing outwards. The background is a solid light blue.

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HHT58

moving images

Egbert & Cisco review videos: Frankie, USA for Africa, Billy Idol, Lou Reed; Jim Jarmusch directs a *Stranger-than-Hollywood* cult classic, featuring a lounge lizard, an avant Hungarian emigre, and the composer for a porno

EGBERT & CISCO AT THE VIDEOS



friends, including Run-D.M.C. They're doing a live performance in front of a Keith Haring-painted backdrop.

CISCO: Do you think it's the backdrop that distinguishes this rap group from other rap groups?

EGBERT: No, there are other factors. They have a good look. I like the way the guy has on a leather hat, leather jacket and white tennis shorts. They have dancers doing the electric boogaloo. I like this video because people are the focus. They have interesting moves, interesting faces, individual styles. They don't need imagery or gimmicks. I think more New York blacks should be on MTV. They're needed.

CISCO: Now they're singing "Freaks Come Out at Night." The audience has open umbrellas. Could that be a trend? Anyway, next up is Cabaret Voltaire's new video, "Sensoria," pronounced like "diarrhea."

EGBERT: I think it's interesting that the box that this cassette came in smells just like shoe polish.

CISCO: Oh, it does!

EGBERT: This video starts out upside down and then becomes a barrage of disorienting images—dozens of images in rapid succession, so fast that you can barely pick them out. I did see some suffering Asians on television and what looked like the headlight of a Studebaker Avanti.

CISCO: There's a very Nazi feel about this.

EGBERT: Maybe because the band is dressed in Nazi uniforms.

CISCO: Those rapid images really do get you dizzy. Is this a French band?

EGBERT: No, they're named after the Dadaist nightclub in Zurich.

CISCO: Are they Germans?

EGBERT: No, they're English. Now we have an Amish—or some sort of fundamentalist—preacher ranting, and a similarly attired girl.

CISCO: She's covered with bruises. She has a cut on her leg. Maybe she cut herself shaving. Can Amish shave their legs?

EGBERT: She could have cut herself on a cactus out on the heath.

CISCO: Now the Amish are breakdancing.

EGBERT: Then we cut to some nuclear power-plant cooling towers, in front of which some seemingly Polynesian women are doing some sort of pagan propitiatory dance, as if to the god of the volcano.

CISCO: Do you think this was rehearsed?

EGBERT: I don't think it was improvised.

CISCO: There's another truck. Last month, every video we saw had a bar in it. This month, it's trucks and large vehicles. I'm glad that one is over. I feel disoriented.

Next, we have Frankie Goes to Hollywood's live performance tape of "Relax." We see them on stage, caterwauling in long coats. They remind me of the Village People.



EGBERT: The Village People were far superior, even cinematically. I'll never forget the scene in their feature film, *Can't Stop the Music*, in which the leather man sings "Danny Boy." It's unforgettable. This Frankie video consists mainly of girls rushing onto the stage to kiss the Frankies. It's unbelievable.

CISCO: They're even kissing them on the mouth.

EGBERT: If you were to believe this video, all of Frankie's fans are teenage girls.

CISCO: Well, if they showed teenage guys jumping on stage and kissing them on the mouth, it wouldn't have made it on to MTV.

EGBERT: A good point. Not one guy has rushed the stage to kiss Frankie Goes to Hollywood.

CISCO: It's somehow reminiscent of *Night of the Living Dead*.

EGBERT: Do you think these teenage girls will wake up the next morning and discover that they have metamorphosed into middle-aged homosexual men?

CISCO: Next, we have David Bowie's "China Girl."

EGBERT: His hair is beautifully done. It's casual but perfect. His skin is perfect. He's perfectly dressed. His costar is a perfect-looking Chinese girl with rather atypical cheekbones.



CISCO: She's very cute.

EGBERT: We see them eating in a Chinese restaurant that looks rather like a very posh bank. We also have some nice views of downtown Sydney, Australia.

CISCO: How do you know that's Sydney, Australia?

EGBERT: Well that's a very famous bridge and that's a very famous bandshell. We see an upright bassist on the dock, waiting for his ship to come in, and we see David running through the downtown streets, very elegantly dressed.

CISCO: Very handsome. If he weren't famous already, he could do Calvin Klein ads.

EGBERT: He's now throwing a huge bowl of rice up in the air and it's coming down on his head.

CISCO: Now the Chinese girl is dressed in a gorgeous ceremonial costume and David is kissing her while the camera circles them faster and faster.

EGBERT: He really messes her lipstick. They smile great smiles. We see her lying alone on a bed, apparently in a post-coital state of relaxation. David appears and jumps right on top of her as we look on from a ceiling fan point-of-view.

CISCO: I don't think she's acting.

EGBERT: What? Do you think he's acting? Oh, wow, here's a reenactment of that famous Burt Lancaster/Deborah Kerr beach kiss in *From Here to Eternity*.

CISCO: Ooh. Pretty hot. Oooh, she's naked.

EGBERT: Let's run that back.

CISCO: I think he's acting and she really likes him.

EGBERT: I liked that video.

CISCO: I didn't mind it at all.

EGBERT: Elegant, really, except maybe for the bassist standing on the dock. Do you think it adds to the viewers' enjoyment of a video if they suspect that there might be some off-camera involvement



between principals in a love scene such as that?

CISCO: I think it makes the viewer feel like a voyeur. I know I felt like one.

EBBERT: Next, we have "Obsession" by Animation.

CISCO: This is another video in which the visuals have absolutely nothing to do with the song.

EBBERT: It's really silly. It's supposed to be about "Obsession," but you haven't got a clue what they're supposed to be obsessed with. The new Calvin Klein perfume is called Obsession and the ad for that is much more to the point.

CISCO: I'm hungry. Next we have Steve Perry doing "Foolish Heart."

EBBERT: Steve Perry? Is that the guy from Aerosmith?

CISCO: Yeah.

EBBERT: This starts out as if it were a Frank Sinatra or Mel Tormé video. It looks as if we're in Carnegie Hall looking down on the stage from the balcony. It's empty, after hours, and there's the singer down on the stage, sitting on a stool under a blue spotlight and singing into a big boom microphone. You can see the brass rail and the mahogany woodwork of the balcony and it looks really plush.

CISCO: In this shot, you're at least 30 rows back. It could be an ant on that stage. It could be Frank, Wayne, Barry. . . .

EBBERT: It's not Tina Turner. Slowly, very slowly, we're zooming in. This whole song is done in one shot, no cuts, just a very slow zoom in and a very slow zoom out. This is not the guy from Aerosmith!

CISCO: No, it isn't! Well, who's Steve Perry?

EBBERT: Oh yeah, Aerosmith is Steve Tyler and Joe Perry. This is somebody completely different. Whoever he is, it looks like he's wearing a matching shirt and tie.

CISCO: He does look familiar. A little like Joe Namath. This tape looks like it was probably made for the new VH-1 adult video station.

EBBERT: They probably show this on MTV so people will have a chance to get up and go to the bathroom.

CISCO: Or make a sandwich.

EBBERT: Conceptually, I really like this. Not one edit in this tape. At the end he's

sitting there silently, by himself, alone in the cavernous hall. He gets up slowly. Puts his hands in his pockets and walks off into the wings. I feel sorry for him.

CISCO: Maybe he's sad because the check is in the mail.

EBBERT: Next, we have a winner of the MTV basement tapes competition. Those are people who made their own rock videos at home.

CISCO: With 40 grand that they found in their basement. And the winner is Kevin J. Friend's "I Am the One."

EBBERT: Kevin is a native of Chicago, Illinois.

CISCO: He looks like he found \$40,000 in his basement. The beginning shows shots of downtown Chicago, mixed with animation and shots of a girl.

EBBERT: I'd like to come out against girls wearing white anklets with high heels. It's a very dated look. I first saw that look about 1972 and I'd say it's time for a new look. Kevin J. Friend could use a new look himself.

CISCO: He's wearing one of those multi-leveled denim jackets that looks like three jackets sewn into one.

EBBERT: He's singing against a field of moving stars, like he's the Starship Enterprise moving through space at warp nine. Meanwhile his girlfriend in anklets is eating an apple.

CISCO: Now she's thrown it away and it's taken over by a squirrel.

EBBERT: This is intercut with shots of them making out and strolling through less-fortunate parts of Chicago, occasionally catching a glimpse of his band, whose hair, if you put it all together, would still not be as long as Kevin's.

CISCO: I wonder what criteria were used in selecting this as the winning video?

EBBERT: I don't know, but voters payed 50 cents to call in and vote for it. Maybe a lot of deaf people voted for this one because he uses a lot of hand gestures.

CISCO: The hand gestures are saying that he's hungry and wants to be fed.

EBBERT: The band members all look suspiciously alike. Maybe he couldn't afford a whole band, so he hired one guy and bought a lot of shirts for him. Oh, no—there they are, all in the same frame. His

band members look like high-school wrestlers, while Kevin himself has lips very much like those of Gardner McKay.

CISCO: Who's Gardner McKay?

EBBERT: He had a show called "Adventures in Paradise" on TV in the early '60s.

CISCO: Right! He had a big yacht called the Tiki and sailed from island to island in the South Seas. "Adventures in Paradise" was like "Route 66," except with a yacht instead of a Corvette.

EBBERT: Yeah, but Kevin J. Friend will never be another Gardner McKay.

CISCO: Next, we have Billy Idol's "White Wedding."

EBBERT: This features his girlfriend Perri Lister, who headed the new wave equivalent of the Solid Gold Dancers—The Cat Club Dancers.

CISCO: This is a wedding, in a church. The guests arrive on motorcycles. She's in white; he's in black leather. There are shots of nails being pounded into wood.

EBBERT: Perhaps it's the coffin of his bachelorhood.

CISCO: God, he's really white. He looks like he takes anti-vitamins. I'd love to see his parents.

EBBERT: He looks like he's made out of wax. Oh my God! When he puts the wedding ring on her finger, it draws blood!

CISCO: It squirts in her face!

EBBERT: Now we see her standing on a terrible precipice. This must be symbolic.

CISCO: Oh God! A motorcycle just went through a stained-glass window. What next?

EBBERT: Next, we see them settling into domesticity. Perri is trying to familiarize herself with the marital kitchen, but everything is going wrong. The toaster blows up. The china is literally flying out of the cupboards. This must be the new-wave Amityville. My God! What next?

CISCO: Next, we have the very important USA for Africa's "We Are the World," featuring many of the greatest stars in pop music.

EBBERT: It's really great to see all of those people singing together. These people are all superstars, but I was actually impressed by how well everyone sang.

CISCO: It's really great to see Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson and Willie Nelson and Tina Turner and Bob Dylan all in the same video.

EBBERT: To name just a few.

CISCO: Is that Linda Evans?

EBBERT: No, it's Kim Carnes.

CISCO: How did they get all of these stars together in one place?

EBBERT: Easy. It's for a good cause and the British Band-Aid thing raised a lot of money, so the Americans thought they could do it too, besides I think it was shot the day before the Grammy Awards.

CISCO: God, this is great. It's like a Miller Lite commercial with all the great athletes.

EBBERT: It is great. What about all the people who weren't in on this? They could do a whole other one: Madonna, Lou Reed. . . .

CISCO: David Lee Roth, Iggy Pop, the Ramones. . . .

EBBERT: James Brown, Afrika Bambaataa. . . .

CISCO: Alvin and the Chipmunks.

EBBERT: This is a great thing. They should keep doing more.

CISCO: Next, we have David Lee Roth's "California Girls."

EBBERT: What can you say about this tape, except that all videos should be this great. This is as sexy as a Pepsi Free commercial, and that's saying something.

CISCO: The girls are great. Look at how many there are. All in bikinis, with great bikini bodies. They're all from California too, I bet.

EBBERT: David Lee Roth is a natural. You can't take your eyes off him. He's a great performer. He has a great career as a movie star ahead of him.

CISCO: Even with all those girls around him, you still look at him.

EBBERT: Even when he makes the lamest moves imaginable, he has some kind of strange, brisk grace about him. And those girls were compelling, to say the least.

CISCO: Next, we have Lou Reed's "I Love You Suzanne." This starts exactly like "Rockford Files"—with a phone ringing and no one answering.

EBBERT: Look, it's Lou Reed. He's wearing his famous sunglasses. He's calling from a phone booth. His motorcycle is parked nearby.

CISCO: Oh, the phone is answered. By a girl.

EBBERT: She looks a lot like a young Joey Heatherton and a little bit like Andy Warhol. She's cute. Lou looks really cool.

CISCO: It's hard to believe that Bob Dylan and Lou Reed make videos.

EBBERT: Here's why he made the video. God, look at him dance! He's dancing like a maniac.

CISCO: He is a maniac.

EBBERT: God, look at those moves!

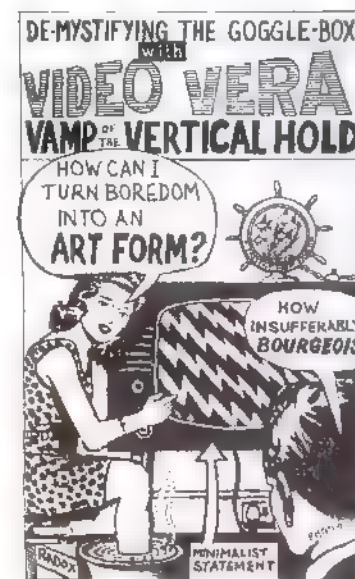
CISCO: Eat your heart out, Bruce Springsteen!

EBBERT: That's why he made the video.

CISCO: To show people he really can dance.

EBBERT: I'm amazed. That was an amazing display. It's a good thing he's one of the greatest singer-songwriters of all time, because if he wasn't, Deney Terrio might be out of a job as host of "Dance Fever."

CISCO: Next, we have "Faithfully" by Journey.



EGBERT: God, here's another video that starts out with a large bus. On the front of the bus, where it would usually say the destination, like "St. Paul" or "Albany," it says "Journey." This is Journey's tour bus. We see them motoring through America, wiping steam off the windows so they can behold the magnificent American panorama outside: the snowy mountains, the sparkling waters, the waving wheatfields. Then we see them talking on the phone in their bus. Their bus has a phone. Next, they arrive at their destination, which turns out to be the Journey airplane, and we see them boarding with their children. A lot of bands would have left their children out of the video. Now we see one of the band members who didn't bring his wife and children along looking at a picture of his wife that he has stuck in the lonely hotel-room mirror. Now he's lonely in the limousine, looking out into the lonely night. Now they're on stage. My God, it's Steve Perry. That's who he is. He's the lead singer of Journey. And now we see him on the big stage in the lonely arena singing to the lonely crowd, and a lonely hand in the lonely crowd is holding up a lonely BIC lighter in what seems to be a gesture of solidarity: two lonely hearts reaching out through the blackness and across the void. Meanwhile, the band is playing their distinctive brand of easy-listening heavy metal. Cut to back stage, and the drummer is candidly playing his sticks on a sofa. Cut back to the airplane, and there is Journey cruising at approximately 35,000 feet over the snowcapped Rockies. Cut back to a huge, appreciative audience. Cut to Steve Perry in the bathroom, lathering up his moustache and wondering "to be or not to be." His moustache is no more.

These guys look like they've been on the road for 100,000 years. They are totally at home in the giant hockey arenas of North America. The intercutting between the vast arena-show shots, the airplane and the bus shots, the candid backstage interplay makes you realize that "Journey" is not a meaningless name. Here is a band on an eternal journey through the snow, the sleet, the hail, out in the hinterlands of America, taking their music to the people. Summer, winter, fall, spring. Touring is their life. In every climate, every year, every season. The show is always the same, whether it's summer in Duluth or winter in Tulsa. You can see that these guys are fulfilled and that they like being on that journey out there into America. Journey—the name of the band that stands for being on tour as a style of life, a way of living. What do you say? CISCO: What? I was making a sandwich. Buses and planes make me hungry.

EGBERT: Well, it was a great trip. It was like a lifetime, really. And it reminded me of something.

CISCO: What's that, Roger?

EGBERT: That one is the loneliest number that you'll ever do.

CISCO: Well, that's all we have time for this month.

EGBERT: We'll see you again, "At The Videos."

Gene Cisco and Roger Ebert are sometimes mistaken for Scott Cohen and Glenn O'Brien.



Kerry Pickett

LIFE AFTER PARADISE

It is ironic that Jim Jarmusch's *Stranger than Paradise*, the first movie to leap from the lower-Manhattan art scene to international recognition, is also a movie that epitomizes the very values that, for years, have kept underground movies in their place.

In fact, the idea to make *Stranger than Paradise* came in the form of some left-over black-and-white "nightshoot" film stock, a gift from director Wim Wenders to his former assistant, Jarmusch. A former New York University film-school student and a member of the band the Del Byzanteens, Jarmusch had directed *Permanent Vacation*, which received some minor attention, mostly in Europe.

Jarmusch approached John Lurie, the lanky sax player and leader of a "modern bebop" band, the Lounge Lizards. Lurie, (above), familiar to New York club audiences, had directed his own Super-8 movies, and appeared in and made music for such low-budget movies as *Sleepless Nights*, *Subway Riders* and *Vortex*. Together, he and Jim concocted a story about two marginal types—an assimilated Hungarian émigré named Willie, and his best friend, Eddy—and how their lives of small-time gambling and hustling are affected by the arrival, from Budapest, of Willie's teenage cousin, Eva, on her way to visit an aunt in Cleveland.

Lurie was to play Willie, and the role of Eva was conceived for Eszter Balint, a 19-year-old actress who had grown up living and working with Squat Theatre, an avant-garde troupe of émigrés transplanted to Manhattan.

To complete the trio, musician Richard Edson joined to play Eddie, Willie's easy-going cohort. A member of Konk, a 10-piece rhythmic dance band, Edson also played trumpet, drums and bass with Sonic Youth, Glenn Branca and Lydia Lunch.

The result of the collaboration was a 30-minute film that was expanded, after successful film-festival screenings, to a 90-minute feature.

Stranger than Paradise takes the trio, who've spent about a week hanging out in New York City, to Cleveland a year later, where Willie and Eddy visit Eva,

who is now living with her Aunt Lotte, an old-world Hungarian, and working in a fast-food joint. The two "kidnap" Eva for a Miami vacation that winds up as a series of mishaps and missed connections in the tropical non-paradise of Melbourne, Florida.

Divided into three sections, the film consists of one-take scenes separated by blackouts. There are no closeups, and no action in the conventional sense. But, somehow, with minimal plot, understated acting and stylized backgrounds, the audience alters its expectations and pays attention to an ironic filmscape.

Shot in 17 days for under \$110,000, and with a beautiful score by Lurie, the film was finished just a few weeks before the Cannes Film Festival. There, they collected their unanticipated Camera D'Or award.

"I don't have a lot of respect for the general state of acting in American films. It's so overdone. I like understated things that are realistic. I'd like you to believe that these people are real."

—Jim Jarmusch

The hoopla, the critical praise and the awards came as a surprise to the participants. Jarmusch probably spoke for everyone involved when he said: "It's been a rat race. It's good—I don't want to complain—but I'm at the point now where I just want to get back to work." Hollywood has beckoned since the film's release, but aside from "taking" a few lunches, Jarmusch has passed on the many scripts and deals he's been offered. "I would never do a film where I didn't have control over the casting and editing—the real film," he says. "So I have no interest in being a hired director." His plans include working as director of photography on a film by Sarah Driver, continuing work with the Del Byzanteens, directing a film of his own in New York this fall, and another collaboration with John Lurie, to be shot in the spring of '86. As for financing, he says, "I believe in the hope of some international, independent way of forming co-productions that avoid Hollywood and the big companies that make products targeted to a specific audience."

"I took it as a lark," Richard Edson says. "It was something to do. It was a cool idea and I liked the cast. The last time I'd acted was in seventh grade." Richard is not about to give up his first love—music—and "go Hollywood." "Acting's a good job if you can get it," he says. "It pays well and I like performing. Still, there's something about it. You're pretending to be something you're not—and if that's what you become, who are you?"

Aside from his continuing participation in Konk, he is working on music with Jarmusch, and with a soul singer from south Philadelphia. And he recently completed some music for a porn film called *Urban Heat*.

Like her character, Eva, Eszter Balint seems to be an independent spirit and she speaks with a slight accent. She almost didn't take the role, fearing it might be too "real." "I'm not playing myself," she said. "I'm a totally different age and background. What's me are the subtle personality traits." And it is those things

"I'm not interested in making movies about people with career aspirations."

—Jim Jarmusch

that she admires in other actors. "Acting is not something I automatically respect as a profession," she says. "To make an audience believe something is a skill, that's all. I look for something special, some charisma, charm, presence—that's what inspires me." She likes Rita Hayworth. "It sounds corny when you say you like old actresses and can't think of any new ones, but American 'new-women' stars... nothing urges me to be like them."

"It doesn't make sense to me anymore. Why is this movie so popular?" John Lurie says. At work on a new Lounge Lizards' album, *Mutiny on the Bowery*, and frustrated by problems in the studio, financial hassles and having to publicize a film he did many months ago, he expresses ambivalent feelings about the turns—or lack of turns—his life has taken since the release. Less jittery in person than Willie, Lurie, who has been compared with Belmondo, nevertheless projects a certain skittishness similar to his character's when faced with external demands. He doesn't like doing publicity and he's not crazy about the attention. Comparing the plethora of positive reviews to "too much sugar," he admits that he has gotten a kick out of the negative ones. "I heard that Stewart Klein or someone like him was going to give the movie a bad review on TV," he says. "So I invited people over to see it, and when he finished his pan, we all cheered."

"I've been through this fame thing before, when the band was big in '80, '81. It made me real paranoid to go out. I'd always maintained an image so that people wouldn't approach me. In this movie, the guy has such an unassuming quality, he seems so malleable, that a lot of people come up and talk to me. It does nothing for me, egotism, if someone comes up and says, 'I like your movie.' If someone who knows what's going on comes up and says they liked the music, I appreciate that."

"Acting scares me," he adds. "In some ways, I don't consider it an art form. I play music, I paint—these things come from your depths. If you don't choose the right roles or become known as an actor first, you are in great danger of becoming plasticated." Still, like Edson, he has signed with an agent at William Morris and also auditioned for a role in "Miami Vice."

"My fantasy about what might have happened after this film? That Scorsese would have asked me to score his latest film, *After Hours*, and then to have gone into the studio to make a Lounge Lizards album with no problems. I guess I just want everything to be available immediately," he says.

"Of course, there's a possibility that nothing will happen," he continues philosophically. "But, you know, I'd be happy just making music."

—Lynn Keller

UNDERGROUND RECORD STORES

Legend has it that, one bright sunny afternoon in Cleveland, Ohio, a poor, hapless soul wandered mistakenly into an underground record store loting a Carpenters album. The clerk took one look at the guy, then the record, pulled a gun, and chased Poor Hapless down the block, threatening his life, limbs, and manhood should he dare darken their step again. The moral of the story is, if you're looking for Styx, Journey, or Carpenters records, you'd best not visit the places mentioned here. These are underground record stores; holes in urban walls and fronts in suburban malls that sell imports, fanzines, the music of local and regional North American bands, hardcore, and hard-to-sell, or just plain hard-to-find, singles, albums and EPs.

Since selecting records by holding the cover to your ear is usually—unless the vibes are right—unreliable, most of these stores make it policy to play any record and let you decide what you think. Chain stores are not eligible for inclusion on this list, though by default they have clearly inspired a good deal of the underground rock movement. Having been an employee at a chain store and having hated it was the single most common reason given for opening an alternative store. Several famous stores weren't listed here because they had forgotten what originally made them great. We couldn't include everyone: Look in any phone book under "Records, phonograph—retail," and you'll begin to see why.

Split into two stores—one for albums, the other for singles—because their stock wouldn't fit in one building anymore, Yesterday and Today (1327 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, 301-279-7007) is a vinyl-junkie's paradise. As the name implies, they carry new and used sides, and specialize in just about everything off the beaten track. Most impressive was their knowledge of current underground; couldn't stump 'em. All this, and mail order, too, makes Y&T possibly the best alternative record store in the United States.

Walking into Vinyl Fetish (7305 Melrose Ave., Hollywood, CA 90046, 213-935-1300) is like visiting Felix Unger's closet: Neatness is everywhere. Always hopping with activity, Fetish is full of scenesters distributing fliers, picking up Los Angeles' free entertainment papers, listening to snatches of records released only the day before in England, or chatting with employees whose home collections often rival the store stock. It's Fetish's policy to buy at least one copy of every release in their milieu (from hardcore to dance rock). The kind of expertise available at Fetish doesn't come cheaply, but for those nursing their own fetishes, Vinyl Fetish is a great place to visit.

Only problem is, they know they're great; if they decide you aren't, they get snooty. Just snoot 'em back.

Or check out Texas Records (2204 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405, 213-450-4290), the brainchild of two former Fetish employees (plus a third friend), who found the role of eternal hipster a little too much to take and so opened their own relaxed operation, where one can find the same mixture of new releases—without "the attitude." Modus operandi is the same as Fetish; only jackets are in the bins. If you bring the jacket to the counter and ask, they'll play the record. You decide whether you like it. The name is a tribute to the owning triumvirate's favorite tune, "The Day I Went Down to Texas," by Orange Juice.

The grandpappy of America's "jacket-only" stores is Rough Trade (326 Sixth St., San Francisco, CA 94103, 415-621-4045). Though unusual in the United States, jacket-only displays are a common practice in Trade's native England, primarily because they prevent shoplifting; few people are interested in stealing sleeves. Rough Trade is a resource, not just another retailer. No matter how obscure the record, you can find out what it sounds like if it's at Rough Trade. That's one of the reasons Rough Trade—which is also an importer, distributor, label, and mail-order house—can buy and sell records nobody ever heard of, wrote about, or played on the radio.

If "Heaven," as it says in the song, "is a place where nothing ever happens," then outposts like Salt Lake City at one time seemed like the closest to heaven one could get without risk. But not since KRCL DJ Brad Collins and partner Daphne Menden got the idea of starting an underground scene in Salt Lake, though. Raunch Records (375 West 400 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84101, 801-532-6592) deals in world hardcore, fanzines, and tickets. "There are lots of kids in Salt Lake," explained Collins, "and though we haven't got one of the hippest scenes, the kids know what they like." So on July 4, 1984, Collins turned a record exchange headquartered in his living room into a real store. Aspirations for Raunch's future include carrying every music fanzine in the world. As for Menden, she brings home the bread (or, more accurately, egg roll) to support the store by working as a waitress—when she's not behind the counter, or recovering from the 20 local live shows Raunch has already produced. Their mail-order catalog features illustrations by infamous underground artist Pushead.

Drastic Plastic (419 South Thirteenth St., Omaha, NE 68102, 402-346-8843) is another grass-roots operation designed to create a scene instead of a profit. "We'd like to see the store self-sufficient someday," says owner Mike Howard, who works as a dispatch messenger for the Omaha World-

Herald, while his wife Liz helps support the store with a job at Mutual of Omaha. More general in what they carry than some of the other shops on this list (imports, American independents, reading matter, videos, T-shirts and military clothing), Drastic is no less committed to making something out of nothing. When asked for five representative records, Howard listed the manic Scraping Foetus off the Wheel, New York City's avant-punk Swans, hardcore band Toxic Reasons, former-punks-gone-'60s-revival TSOL, and British rockabilly zanies The Meteors.

In any major urban center or college town, you're bound to find some kind of alternative music scene. Ask local band members where they sell their records, listen to a good college station and ask them to recommend a place, or look inside fanzines and see who advertises. There may not be a good shop in any given small town, but there's always some place within a day's driving distance—because when there isn't, some entrepreneur with a spare room always appears.

Such as Deadly Records (136 Chime St., Baton Rouge LA 70714, 504-774-8286). A one-man crusade to expose "new music" in the deep South, Deadly is a rented nook inside a commercial store. Deadly's Dr. Death organizes

concerts, deejays for clubs and on radio, sells through mail order, and promotes the shimmery and echo-laden sound that made labels like Britain's 4AD and Factory popular.

Specializing in "non-radio records," Underground (1992 East Sunrise Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 305-525-4475) carries punk, dance rock and "new music," and sells hardcore fanzines, T-shirts, stickers and buttons. Foreign hardcore is their first love.

Wax 'n' Fax (432 Moreland Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, 404-525-1679) is the home of the guitar-jangle label DB Records. Deliberately casual, with cardboard boxes and second-hand furniture, Wax was founded by former DJ Danny Beard when the radio station he worked for went gospel. He won't unseal and play records on principle ("You're paying for a new, not used, album"), but he will describe the sound if he can. "People like to go there and hang out because they'll run into a few kindred spirits," explains a Wax

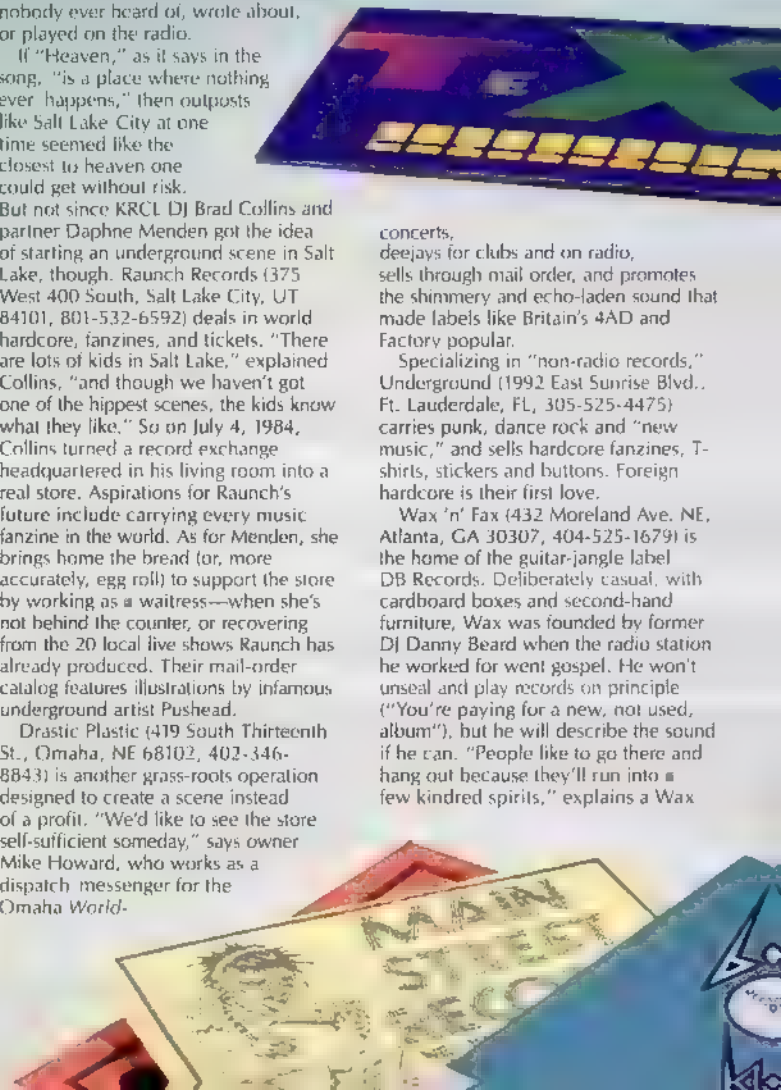


Derek Lynch

Article by Andrea 'Enthal



W/ Brenda Meyer



customer, "and it has a nice, non-corporate atmosphere."

Those who think hip and urban are one and the same need only visit the sleepy beach community slightly north of San Diego that Lou's Records (590 First St., Encinitas, CA 92024, 619-753-1382) calls home. Crowded, plain, in a nondescript storefront, Lou's selection of imports and American independent labels rivals the Hollywood hipsters' any day. These people know records, the cuts on each record, and best of all, while they know how knowledgeable they are, they don't let it go to their heads. Which makes Lou's one of the most refreshingly down-to-earth holes one can mine for vinyl.

College students often have roommates, and student-oriented stores usually don't. But Urban Renewal (4548 University Way NE, Seattle, WA, 206-634-1775) splits its rent with Innervisions, an unrelated poster store, as a way to handle what would otherwise be an unaffordable monthly bill. "The store's like a mini radio station," explains Tim Jones from the front counter, when asked how people can find out what's on the unknown records they have in stock. "It's an education, not a cattle call to records," he continues, explaining Urban's perspective. As for how the retail-roomie situation works, the answer is simple: Urban gets the floor; Innervisions,

the walls.

Another Seattle store with a split identity is Fallout Records (1506 East Olive Way, Seattle, WA 98122, 206-323-2662). Skateboards are one specialty, hardcore punk, the other; and skatepunk, a form of hardcore thrash

with lyrics about the fun times of youth, is their love. From a store not much bigger than a living room, where nobody could skateboard without breaking their neck, Fallout sells tickets, T-shirts,



American indies, '60s garage-punk reissues, and boards. They also manage to arrange skateboard contests.

People from all over Missouri and Kansas drive to Rock Therapy (1607 Westport Rd., Kansas City, MO 64111, 816-531-8750), where records by Nick Cave, Cabaret Voltaire, and Hüsker Dü are easy to find. "It's my taste that determines what we carry," explains Therapy's Duncan, who also promotes shows in the area. "We're not really making any money, but we're here."

New Englanders have many record stores to choose from, but Mainstreet

Records (213 Main St., Northampton, MA 01060, 413-586-5726) is their best. Ken, the owner, was an avid collector in earlier life. "We're not a big, money-grubbing operation," explained the clerk on duty. "We just love music." Housed in a two-story building with a basement devoted to used records, Mainstreet is one of the bigger stores in underground rock.

The biggest has to be Wax Trax (2449 North Lincoln, Chicago, IL 60614, 312-929-0221). With their own recently created dance-music label occupying offices on a third floor, and a rock fashion boutique on the second, Trax sells new, used, import and American small-label releases, collector's items, art and rock videos, and posters. Though Trax's size has caused some to consider it anything but underground, it is still fiercely proud of selling music that chain stores won't touch. "They're big," says a former regular customer, "but if you want to find an underground record, they're so big, they'll have it." Their mail-order division was recently discontinued.

Zed Records (1940 Lakewood Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90815, 213-498-2757) hardly looks like a haven for hardcore fanatics, but that's where they'll be found, mixed amiably with reggae and import fans. Zed was originally located in the living room of a funky downtown house, where owner Mike Zampelli slept on a cot in the aisle after hours and showered at a neighbor's two doors down. He now has one of the few video systems that can play British tapes, manufactures rock buttons, and sells by mail order from his tiny, clean store.

Disillusioned with his hometown, Los Angeles native Andy Horwitz moved to New Mexico, where he sold his personal album collection to start Bow Bow (103 Anherst SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, 505-256-0928). Describing his stock as "new and experimental music, from hardcore to Peruvian pipes," Horwitz sponsors live shows in the store and hangs art (instead of record ads) on the walls.

Free Being Records (129 Second Ave., New York, NY 10003, 212-260-1774) is one of a handful of record shops one may find around St. Mark's Place, a trendy area where aboveground gift shops and underground rock stores flourish. Snotty in a way only New Yorkers (or record-store clerks) can be, they'd only tell us the store started in the beatnik era and that subsequent owners never bothered to change the name. British punk bands like Broken Bones, American garage rockers The Replacements, and Scraping Foetus were cited as typical stock. When we asked if they'd play those records for customers, the answer was a laconic, "It depends." So we asked, "On what?" "Who you are," was their answer. Apparently, even to be spoken with, you gotta rate.

Last, but certainly not least, honorable mentions to: Waterloo Records (221 South Lamar, Austin, TX 78704, 512-479-0473), who sell "a little bit of everything," offer a money-back guarantee on records sold, and describe



their policy on exposing customers to music this way: "You look through our bins and we don't care if you find 20 records you don't know but want to hear. We'll play them for you." ... Fueled by the students of Cornell University, Rebop Records (316 College Ave., Ithaca, NY 14850, 607-273-0737) sells indies, imports, fanzines, "even records people never heard of," in revolt against the chain stores of the area. . . Wax Trax (638 East Thirteenth Ave., Denver, CO 80203, 303-831-7246) is independently owned, but shares a name with the Chicago outlet because the Chicago store started there. Their selection of avant-punk, new wave, hardcore, reggae and even motion-picture soundtracks is

fanatically loved by Colorado undergrounders. . . And Atomic Records, "The music store guaranteed to blow you away," is at 210 Main, Huntington Beach, CA 213-536-9911. We don't have space to say anything about them, except to award them "Best Name."

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UB40

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

More than any other British act, UB40 is responsible for the way reggae became ingrained in British culture. Imported reggae staked a claim 15 years ago, of course, and shiny white groups The Police and The Clash, to name two that spring most easily to mind, spread the word (and the dub and *feeee-ling*) wide and smooth. But UB40 are British, black and white, and all reggae. They are also immensely popular—only a couple of years ago one of those names only the hippest music followers knew, today just one exciting heartbeat under “supergroup.”

“UB40 are just a pop band,” is Jim Brown, the drummer’s, understated definition. “I love reggae more than any other music,” he continues in the wavering Midlands lilt he shares with the group’s seven other members, “but it’s only another form of pop. In fact, a lot of people consider reggae to be far grander than it actually is, but I think that’s a common misinterpretation of its simplicity. However, I think that simplicity means there’s a way you can relate to reggae that’s easier than any other form of music, because it doesn’t dazzle you in any technical way. It’s just very simple. And that’s

one of the reasons a lot of people don’t like it—in fact, plenty of people *hate* it for its simplicity. But if you do like it . . . you tend to *love* it with all your being.”

UB40’s origins, in tone with the simplicity of its musical style, are among the least contrived of contemporary British groups: It existed as a gang of friends long before it became a group of musicians. Robin Campbell and his brother Ali began playing guitars in 1978 in Balsall Heath, Birmingham. They were joined by Brown, Brian Travers on saxophone, Earl Falconer on bass, percussionist Norman Hassan, Mickey Virtue on keyboards, and Astro, who became their “toaster.”

UB40’s strength is literally in its numbers, the diversity of human input into the group, and the racial balance—not only whites and blacks, but even an Indian in Norman Hassan. Their name is taken from that absolute guarantee of social worthiness, the British standard-issue unemployment card, the Unemployment Benefits 40. The collective body of UB40 is a microcosm of British society, and speaks with a voice that has fused the positive elements of that mixture into its soul.

They have resolutely refused to sign a contract with a major record company, sticking with their own label in their unromantic, polluted Midlands home city. The UB40 operation has always maintained a great distance from the UK music establishment. “We don’t trust anybody, and that’s one of our strengths,” says Brian Travers. Their initial single, “Food for Thought,” a hit during early spring of 1980, was the first record on an independent label (Graduate, a small Birmingham company) to make the British Top 10 charts. It was swiftly followed onto the album charts by *Signing Off*, their first LP. Breaking away from Graduate, UB40 created DEP. Now that DEP is financially strong, UB40 has signed

two reggae artists they long regarded as inspirational—Lovers Rock crooner Winston Reedy, and toastmaster Mikey Dread—plus Echo Bass, a young reggae act from Birmingham. DEP signed a U.S. distribution deal with A&M two years ago. It was one, if not their only, concession to record-industry expectations. “We wouldn’t sign before that, because we were trying to get the records distributed independently,” says Brian Travers. “With us living in England, we couldn’t do justice to everybody’s records. It’s the nearest thing in an American deal to what we want.”

It was not until 1983 that UB40 became a household name in Britain. The *Labour of Love* LP was their first not to feature original material; instead, it was filled with the group’s interpretations of classic reggae songs of the early ’70s, tracks like Tony Tribes cover of Neil Diamond’s “Red Red Wine,” Eric Donaldson’s “Cherry Oh Baby,” The Wailers’ “Keep on Moving,” and Jimmy Cliff’s “Many Rivers to Cross.” This was in stark contrast to their previous effort, *UB44*, which contained a number of strong group compositions, but was a murky recording, with the customary soaring, inspired thrust of their live sound lost in a miasma of mixes and technical imbalance. Even the much-lauded stage sound, which made the group’s early reputation as they played the Birmingham pub circuit (side by side with the galloping ska sound of The Specials and The Beat), was in trouble. During their *UB44* tour the group’s tired efforts suggested they may have prematurely burnt out.

Labour of Love was their “real roots,” claims Ali Campbell. And the British record-buying public, hypnotized by its singalong qualities, took to heart tunes they might have rejected had they heard them when first released. “Red Red Wine,” for example, was number one for eight weeks in the summer of ’83. Mean-

while, in the US, *Labour of Love* on A&M became a Top 40 hit. *Gefferey Morgan*, their next LP, was released in November of '84, and has stayed on the charts, bubbling under the Top 40, ever since.

The title comes from a line of Balsall Heath graffiti which took the group's fancy: "Gefferey (sic) Morgan Loves White Girls." Almost predictably, it has no connection whatsoever with the content of the record.

"Our fans are kids from the streets," says Robin Campbell, "just like us. We're just trying to express the problems they have to deal with. That's why on *Gefferey Morgan* we've got songs like "Riddle Me," which is about how the state education system is just for keeping the working class in their place—but if you've got the money and you're from the upper classes, then the world's at your feet.

"Or there's 'The Pillow,' which is about the way so many prostitutes are on junk—the real reason they're on the game, to pay for their habits. And we see that all the time in Birmingham. And it's what goes on in all the big cities, not just in Britain, but all over the world. If we're such emotional cripples that we can't bring ourselves to talk about our own feelings, then we might as well use that to our advantage and express what we see around us. After all, someone's got to do it."

"Just dealing with reality and getting ridding of the fuckeries," interrupts toaster Astro, succinctly summarizing the UB40 philosophy.

Jim Brown, who with Robin Campbell writes many of the politically oriented lyrics that are a call sign of the group, believes it is "the most interesting album we've done, because the result of not recording our own material for so long means we've captured more successfully than on any other of our records an excitement that we have live. We represent something that's reliable and durable—onstage we're not projecting ourselves or how pretty we are, we're just playing the music."

"I think *Labour of Love* gave us breathing space, time to digest what had gone down in the past few years. That's why *Gefferey Morgan* sounds so good," assesses Astro.

Unlike Brown, he is unable to separate totally reggae's mystical element from its commercial force, because he is a devout Rasta. Yet Astro is sufficiently pragmatic to realize the tub-thumping Rastafarianism of many reggae lyrics prevents a wider audience from embracing the music. And he feels that white reggae snobs, concerned only with maintaining a hip edge through their (limited) knowledge of an esoteric music, collaborate to hold back reggae's development. "The religious aspect of reggae, the references to Jah, is really above the majority of people's heads," comments Brian Travers.

"These so-called purists," Astro adds, shaking his head in frustration, his locks flying in every direction, "have to understand that reggae is music, first and foremost, and Rastas have only adopted it as their way of being able to put their message across. But reggae started out as Jamaican pop music, and dub is. And, yes, the Rasta faith does use reggae and dub to preach, but that's not just what reggae's there for.

"We've all got our culture, but, equally, we can all learn from each other. And that's what UB40 is all about."

SPIN followed UB40 to the sound check for their recent New York appearance, the last leg of a two-month, 40-venue, sold-out tour. The band traveled throughout the States in a chartered bus, a rolling living room equipped for the perpetual TV party: beer, soda, snacks, a VCR, carpeting, and, of course, a couch.

SPIN: What's the personality of UB40?

BRIAN: We're all real cynical, making fun everywhere. Most of us grew up together, went to school together. We've never had anyone different in the band. Nobody's ever been sacked or replaced. Right now we have two extra horn players; they came along for the tour because they've got no work. We all know each other really well, so we make fun of everybody we meet. We have secret languages.

SPIN: Like a gang, really. I imagine with that many of you it kinda gets a bit crowded when you're in that bus for a long time. . . . Do you always get along?

BRIAN: We do. We know what winds each other up. We all know how far to go with each other. It's cool, it works. If we've got problems, we know everything about it, and we sort it all out. We always knew who could do what good, who could shoplift well.

SPIN: Did you have to shoplift when you were young?

BRIAN: Nobody has to. We didn't do it on a major scale, just if there were important big numbers—coats and suits, good shirts. England's very fashion-conscious. Youth culture's really prominent. The major radio and TV stations cover the whole of Great Britain. So if a band has a hit on the radio, they have a hit all across the country. If a new style of clothes is just out, a week later in Scotland, everyone's onto it already. But in England, if you're from a well-off family, you don't actually get to look that trendy. It's only the middle-class kids that want to look poor. We all wanted to look clean and tidy, not fucked-up—just more realistic.

SPIN: You're cynical, then; you don't trust people you meet. You have your own record label.

BRIAN: Of course. DEP is really just the eight of us, and a couple of other guys who work with us on the record label. It's good, because we don't have to ask to do anything. If we all want to do it, we do it.

SPIN: Your last album is very accessible. It will probably introduce a lot of people to reggae.

ROBIN: Well, that's the idea, except it doesn't seem to be getting that much radio play. There's nothing we can do about that. We're playing sold-out shows in theaters. The other end is down to the record companies.

SPIN: Reggae's always had a cult following in America, but it's never broken through like funk. . . .

ROBIN: Well, funk's American! That's the problem in

America, that it's really conservative, very middle-of-the-road. The new bands here all sound like what Human League did three years ago. It takes forever for anything to catch on. It's the same way with reggae. When we first came, the only name anybody knew was Bob Marley.

SPIN: How old were you when you left school?

ROBIN: Fifteen. I had a choice—either get transferred or get expelled. But when I transferred, nobody would accept me. So I ended up leaving.

SPIN: Did you have a job once you left school?

ROBIN: Yeah, I got an apprenticeship. It was for tool-making, which is, in very general terms, skilled factory work, making the molds for stamping machines. I had about eight months to go to be qualified when I quit.

SPIN: Were you playing music then?

ROBIN: None of us were until we joined the band. When I left that job I had to be an encyclopedia salesman. . . .

SPIN: You're considered a "working class" band. Do you see any differences between the American and British working class, at least from what you've observed being on the road?

ROBIN: The American and British working classes are just the same. It's apathy. It's not their fault, it's their conditioning. From kindergarten they're put through the process which churns them out at the other end. Wanting nothing else, expecting nothing else. . . . it's exactly the same in England, where the miners' strike has just been broken. The unions had no support at all. The people who should have been their allies just turned their backs on them. But any working-class struggle that's got the support of the working class is going to win. There's more of us than them. And they're all scared—there's a depression on.

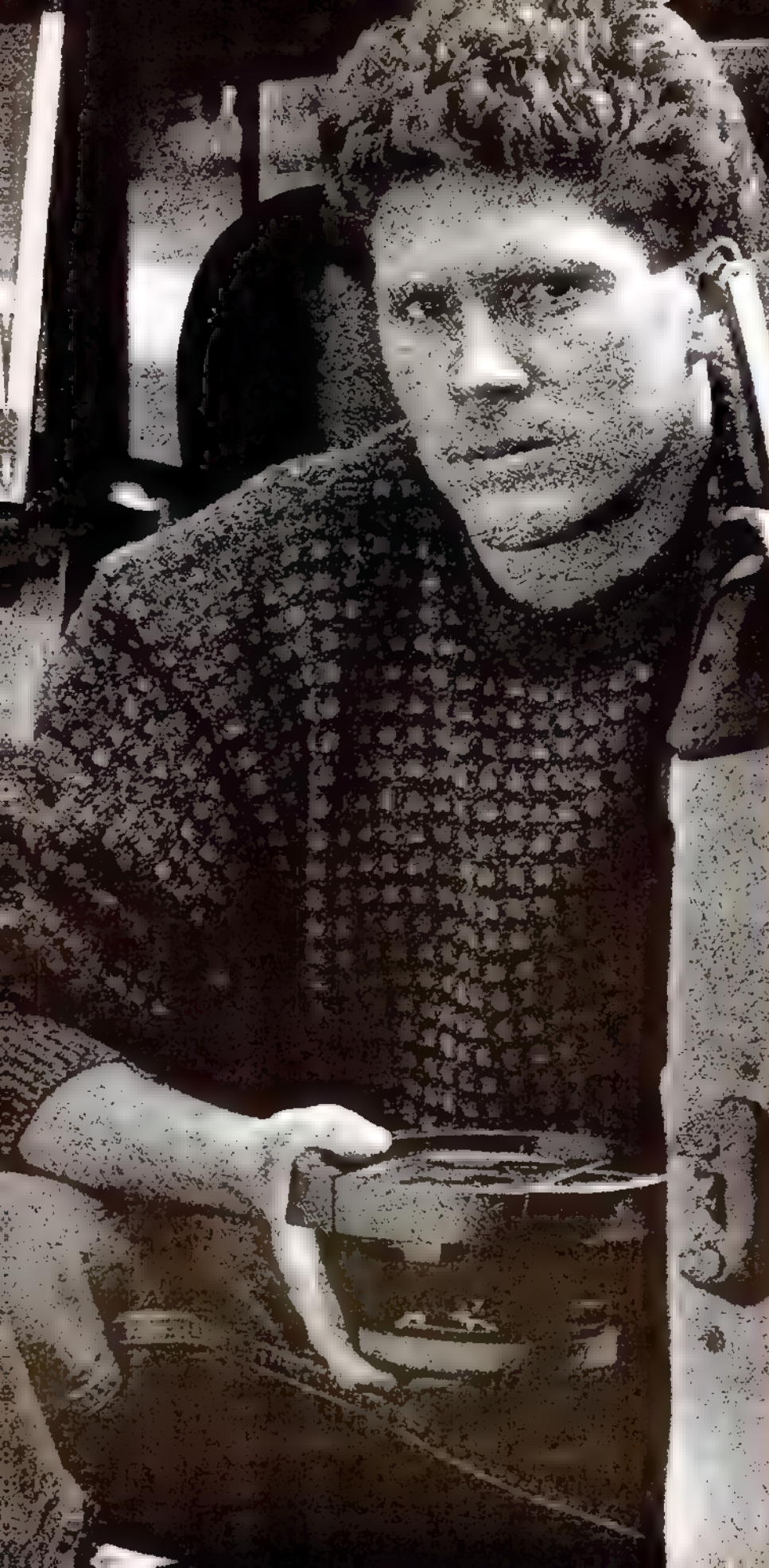
SPIN: What's it like to grow up in Birmingham?

ROBIN: The area we all come from is a slum—south-east Birmingham. The farther out you get from the city, the nicer it gets. But towards the center, it's an industrial center. There's a lot of car factories. Also, there's a very high immigrant population. Where we were, there was a 90-percent black population, either Asians, or Jamaicans, West Indians. Which is why we're into reggae. We grew up on it.

—Interview by Sue Cummings



Eight wild and crazy guys who used to shoplift coats and suits (2nd L to R, Ali Campbell, Astro, Brian Travers, Norman Hassan, Mickey Virtue, Robin Campbell, Earl Falconer and Jimmy Brown), and their two touring sidemen (left) Patrick Tenvue and (right) Henry "Buttons" Tenvue. Opposite page, Astro and Robin.



I didn't buy my car stereo backwards.

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STATE OF THE ART

Car stereos that will move you, and producer Nile Rodgers talking about his.



Column by Edward Rasen

Buying a good car radio can be a real drag. New-car dealers usually sell the factory-installed junk, and it doesn't matter whether you are spending \$6,000 for a Chevette or \$46,000 for a Porsche. You can go crazy listening to salesmen at stereo stores and discount houses who dazzle customers with mind-boggling wall displays featuring 20 or 30 radios and almost the same number of speakers. Some of the items usually have red tags marked with prices indicating great savings. Others just happen to be one-and-only floor samples which have to be sold by the end of the day. There is a possibility that you're getting a good deal; it's more likely that you're not. Most salesmen sell products that pay big commissions. Most companies spend lots of money advertising flashy but trashy products. And remember one thing: You can't evaluate car radios by listening to units in open-wall displays.

I asked Robert Drake, president of Robert Drake Associates (361 West 52 St., New York, NY 10019, 212-957-1009), to assist me with my research. Drake's company specializes in building sound systems for recording studios and night-clubs. Through those clients, he has met others who want custom sound-systems for their homes or cars. His clients include Joel Grey, Bernard Edwards, Herbie Mann, George Barry, Nile Rodgers, Neshui Ertegun, and Geraldo Rivera. Currently, he is installing a sound system in Diana Ross's limousine. Drake has a reputation for building or assembling quality sound systems, whether for big or small budgets. He is concerned only with pleasing his customers and doesn't sell

product that doesn't meet his high standards. The following recommendations are the result of seemingly endless research and evaluation. I am sure there are some units that could be added to the list, but the following will serve you well.

Drake himself uses Nakamichi's top-of-the-line products. He admits that other companies make equal or better tuners, but doesn't think anyone equals Nakamichi's cassette tape players. He particularly likes the feature which allows you to "zero-azimuth" any tape—something which can dramatically improve the sound of most tapes, including those manufactured by major record companies.

Drake also likes some less-expensive but very difficult-to-obtain units by Autovox, a 50-year-old Italian company which just began selling in the United States through Riss International of Palo Alto, CA (415-493-7538). Drake says Pioneer's chief car-audio technician turned him on to Autovox last year while they were in Italy. Supposedly, Pioneer technicians consider Autovox's top-of-the-line units the best-designed car radios in the world. "The Italians are really into car stereos," says Drake, "and they want nothing but the best."

Autovox has not only designed a good-looking, good-sounding unit, but also solved the car stereo rip-off problem. The entire unit is easily removable from the dash, so you never have to leave it with the car. Autovox sells it with a Gucci-style carrying case. The Autovox Shuttle 1000 retails in the United States for \$600. It will be superseded by the Shuttle 1020 (\$620), which has the same features as the 1000 but offers a Dolby noise-reduction system and 60 watts of power instead of 18 watts. Both units fea-

ture PLL (phase locked loop) electronic tuning, presets for 27 stations, direct station access (just punch the numbers for the station on the calculator-type keyboard), locking fast-forward and rewind, auto-reverse, power-off eject (turn off the ignition and the tape automatically ejects), and a power antenna lead which automatically raises and lowers the antenna. Autovox's appearance and functionality are truly state-of-the-art. There aren't any dials or switches: keyboard-style buttons control all functions. The layout is such that it is very difficult to push two buttons at once.

"The Centrate System, Pioneer's new top-of-the-line product, is exceptional," says Drake. "But, again, it is difficult to find in the United States." Also, the Centrate System is very expensive. Total cost for all the components and installation is \$2,000 to \$3,000.

The heart of the system is the computer-controlled AM/FM stereo cassette unit. It has 18 station presets (12 FM and six AM); a radio program timer which lets you preprogram up to two different stations at two different times; an automatic mute function, which is really nice when you get calls on your mobile telephone; station scan; and a quartz clock. The control panel flips down to reveal a microprocessor-controlled three-motor direct-drive auto-reverse cassette deck with Dolby B and C. Are you impressed? The tape player has numerous features, including bidirectional scanning, which allows you to review either side of a tape. Just in case regular cassettes don't satisfy your ears, the back panel of the tuner has connectors for a digital cassette or compact disc player.

An add-on graphic equalizer, which sells for \$240, offers an "Auto Sound Levelizer" which automatically adjusts sound levels to various driving conditions. Lower a window and the volume goes up; pull off the highway onto a secondary road or side street, and the volume goes down. Obviously, a nice feature to have during those high-speed runs when you're trying to lose Smokey. Other components include a remote-control unit, power amplifier, subwoofer and speakers.

Sony is another big company that produces some fine products. Their XR-75 unit (\$475) has an excellent tuner and tape player and isn't as temperamental as, say, a Nakamichi or a Concord. It's a great unit for off-road vehicles, according to Al Hall, editor of *Off Road* magazine. Sony's XR-100 (\$650), its new radio/cassette player, uses "diversity tuning" to solve erratic-reception problems in a moving car. The radio uses two antennas, one on the front of a vehicle and the other on the rear. A high-speed circuit "listens" to the signals from both antennas, and a microprocessor chooses the strongest signal.

The XR-100, which was introduced last year, also features Dolby B and C, which together dramatically reduce tape hiss during playback of prerecorded tapes. Sony is supplementing the line with the XR-900 (\$600) and the XR-80 (\$430). These have new cassette decks which feature narrow-gap hard-permalloy heads and FG servo motors, resulting in exceptionally low levels of distortion, wow and flutter.

Sony is another Japanese company that is upgrading its image by producing a new line, which will be sold under the "ULTRX" tag rather than the Sony name. The ULTRX UR80 (\$470) is truly a state-of-the-art audiophile tuner/cassette unit. The quartz-locked, frequency-synthesized tuner and the auto-reverse cassette mechanism are integrated with a two-kilobyte microcomputer. The cassette deck also features Dolby B and C, along with the dbx noise-reduction system. A tape-scan function samples the first few seconds of each selection on a tape before skipping to the following track. A remarkably clean 15-watts-per-channel power amplifier and a high-definition preamplifier are part of the incredible unit. Other features include programmable auto-scan and seek, 18 station memory presets, and a digital clock. I could, if space permitted, write a great deal about this unit. I suggest you contact one of the select ULTRX dealers for more information. Their names are available from Sony; call Bill Bast, 213-537-5830.

Alpine is a company that Drake really likes, mainly because Reese Haggott, the general manager, is deeply committed to strong quality-control in the manufacturing process. Also, Alpine is very selective about its dealers. Alpine products seldom need repair, and if they do, their dealers will usually just give the customer a new unit. Haggott knows that word-of-mouth recommendations are the best form of advertising, and expects his dealers to bend over backwards for customers. Alpine, in turn, doesn't back-stab its dealers. You won't find Alpine products sold by big stereo chains or discount houses. Obviously, Alpine products are slightly overpriced in the marketplace, but you have to expect this if you want a strong warranty program. However, regardless of price, Drake calls the Alpine 7162 (\$220) a "best buy." The radio features electronic tuning, and the cassette deck has auto-reverse. Drake also cites the 7171 (\$270), which has Dolby noise-reduction, as a best buy for European-made cars.

In the same price range, Drake also likes the Yamaha YCR-150 (\$250), which features electronic tuning, Dolby noise-reduction and an auto-reverse tape deck.

Drake's other mid-priced favorite is the Sansui RX series: the RX-4000 (\$289), RX-3000 (\$239), and RX-2000 (\$199). The three models feature PLL synthesizer tuners with digital station-frequency readout, and ASRC (Automatic Stereo Reception Controller) to reduce noise and provide a stable signal under varying driving/signal conditions. All have presets for six FM and six AM stations, automatic scan, manual tuning and a power antenna lead.

Denon, another Japanese company with a reputation for building high-quality home-audio equipment, has decided to enter the car market with a line of audiophile components. The DCR-7600 (\$600) cassette tuner and the DCR-5500 cassette receiver (\$500) both feature Dolby B and C, quartz/PLL digital tuners, auto-reverse decks, six station-preset functions for each of the FM and AM bands, and automatic noise-cancellation circuitry. Once again, the product is difficult to buy, since Denon's dealers are

small in number.

Drake is very opinionated about speakers. His favorite high-end unit is by Polydax, a small French company which has little distribution in the United States. Second place goes to JBL's new high-performance line of car speakers. They are closely followed by ADS' 300i (\$275 per pair) and 320i (\$250 per pair) units. In the mid-to-lower price range, he endorses the entire Panasonic EAB series, which ranges from the top-of-the-line EAB-697 (\$120 per pair) to the little 911 (\$40 per pair) door speakers. Drake uses Monster Cable's Hot Wires for all his installations; it is the only speaker wire designed specifically for cars and is specially twisted to reduce engine noise. It is available in various configurations, including a flat version for under floor mats.

There is one matter that Drake, the manufacturers, the retailers and the installers are all in agreement about: cleaning and maintenance of cassette players. It is plain stupid to spend money for a good radio/cassette unit and not take care of it. Dirty tape heads produce distorted or muffled sounds. Also, continuous play of tapes magnetizes the heads.



MY CAR STEREO

by Nile Rodgers

I spend a lot of time each day driving my Maserati Bora between my home in Westport, Connecticut, and the Power Plant recording studio in Manhattan. It is important that I have high-performance audio equipment in my car so I can review my studio work and all the demo tapes I get. The car has a big, powerful V8 engine just behind the driver's and passenger's seats. The engine used to distort the bass sounds in the car. I wanted the bass very clear, since I produce a lot of dance-type music. So I hired Robert Drake, a high-tech audio expert, to study the interior design and acoustics of the car before he installed a new system.

Drake noticed that the Maserati and my Porsche have a lot of AC induction, which means you need a well-shielded system so you don't have to use suppressors. My AM/FM/cassette player is a top-of-the-line unit from Alpine, and I just added Sony's new portable compact disc player. It's the greatest thing in the world; it's totally impervious to car vibrations. The sound is fantastic because I have lots of power; 600 watts of power, to be exact. I have more power in my car than I do at the Power Plant.

I have one primary power amp and one amp for each set of speakers. All the amps are by AudioMobile, as are the electronic crossovers and the equalizer. The speak-

ers are connected to the amps with Monster Cable speaker wires. I have two 15-inch sub-woofers—for the ultra-low bass sounds—one in each footwell on the driver's and passenger's sides. There are eight-inch woofers for the bass sounds in each door, and above them, near each window, are three-inch drivers for mid-range sounds. Also, in each door is a really bright-sounding tweeter for the ultra-high frequencies. The subwoofers are by JBL and the other speakers are by Polydax. The entire system is worth five or six thousand dollars. It's protected by touch-sensitive doors, touch-sensitive seats, and mercury switches, so when pressure is exerted on the car, the alarms—really loud air horns—go off. When the pressure stops, the alarms stop.

In my Porsche, I have three separate Audiomobile amps—two for the back speakers and one for the front speakers, which are all ADS 300i units. Each has a 5½-inch woofer and a three-inch tweeter. The units can handle up to 100 watts of power and are fuse-protected so you cannot blow them. The tweeters are really nice because the frequency range is adjustable. I had the top-of-the-line Alpine AM/FM/cassette unit in the car, but now I'm using a Blaupunkt. However, Robert Drake has suggested that I try the new top-of-the-line Sony unit.

I keep a little Toyota at home for doing errands and running around town. Drake had real problems with it, especially because there wasn't any room to install anything. He was forced to use a medium-priced Alpine unit with an Alpine amp and Philips speakers. It really sounds good, which is amazing, considering it used to sound like a portable radio inside a shower. It is proof that you can have good sound in any car without spending a lot of money.

Nile Rodgers, the former mastermind of Chic, has produced songs and albums for Mick Jagger, Sister Sledge and The Thompson Twins.



92.7 FM

NEW YORK

THE STATION THAT DARES TO BE DIFFERENT

JULIE BROWN from page 27

on my part, just picking people that are attractive and neat. I'm trying to think of good actors that I'd like to work with... I'm not sure. I can't think of any.

SPIN: Are your parents into your career?
JULIE: Yeah, my parents are the best. They are so great. They always said they didn't want me to be an actress when I grew up. But when I said I wanted to become an actress, they said, "Okay, great," and they paid for me to go to acting school. And they always come to my shows and they bring people to my shows. They're wonderful.

SPIN: Have you ever had any jobs besides show business?

JULIE: Sure. I was a waitress; I was a hostess. When I first came to LA, I was a hostess at a restaurant/bar in Beverly Hills called The Ginger Man that all these stars came to. It was really weird to see them, because they would come in and get really blitzed, really drunk, get really weird. Dennis Wilson would come in and drink champagne and eat artichokes and get so weird. It's weird to be an aspiring actress and see these people who have what you want being so weird. Then I got fired from there and that was the last real job I ever had.

SPIN: Do you list yourself as a comedienne on your income tax?

JULIE: No. As an entertainer and a writer. If you're an entertainer you can write off so much stuff. Someday I'm going to buy a baby grand piano, bring it on stage for five seconds, and say, "I'm bringing it on stage so I can get a write off," play a couple of notes. You can bring all kinds of things on stage.

SPIN: Do you have any spare time?
JULIE: No, and that really makes me nuts.
SPIN: If you did, then what would you do with it?

JULIE: Really boring things like read more and shop more, normal-person things. Sometimes I'll find I have a chance to go grocery shopping, and I find that really relaxing.

SPIN: What's your favorite dance step?
JULIE: The Monkey is pretty funny.

SPIN: What was the first record you ever bought?

JULIE: I think it was Elvis Presley, *Blue Hawaii*. I was really into Elvis when I was little. I was really into music when I was really little. When I was four I asked my parents for a radio.

SPIN: Do you watch TV?
JULIE: Not very much, but I do watch David Letterman all the time.

SPIN: Have you been on Letterman?
JULIE: No, I think I have to become more famous. I'll be on at the right time.

SPIN: There was this weird rumor going around...

JULIE: That I'm a man?



KISS ME BEFORE YOU GO GO

Other cities don't have what Washington, D.C. has... the beat, the pulse, the momentum. Other cities don't have go go.

Article by Barry Michael Cooper

The Black Hole Club. Nearly 800 teenagers are dancing, writhing, and sweating in near darkness, under a psychedelic assault of red, white, blue and green strobes. Chuck Brown and The Soul Searchers are on stage singing, "We need money... money... money! Talking 'bout that moolah, y'all!"

The audience screams: "That moo-lah, y'all."

Pungent odors of sweat, tobacco and beer hang in a miasmic arc over the crowd, like the ceiling of some weird nocturnal temple. At the foot of the stage is a tall girl: dreamy, creamy, willowy. Dorothy Dandridge, Part II. Eyes closed and insular, she slowly grinds, alone. Aloof. A clean machine. Loose black-leather pants, white sweatshirt, white low-cut basketball sneakers. Silky, ebony hair lassoed by a white sweatband. Slowly grinding. How old is she? 15, 16, 17?

The music is fast, abrasive, blasting in quad orchestral stops. *Zuhhn! Zuhhn!* Musical commands from the band. *Zuhhn! Zuhhn!* Translation: "Twist, turn, move, y'all." And almost everybody does.

The wallflowers, those shy young things forced by the menace of peer pressure to make the scene, feel and squint their way in the strobe-frag-

mented darkness, into the vast sea of leather jackets, polyester Kangol tennis-bum hats and cotton sweatpants. They move cautiously, watching the dancers around them. Old pros, those dancers, moving to the sounds, the instructions, the *zuhhn zuhhn* that barks and bite and devour any semblance of individuality.

Because when the sweat begins to pop, and drip, and saturate, the cool-jerk mascara of the wallflowers begins to run, and the facade drips away, and we see the young zombies.

Zuhhn. Zuhhn.

"We need money/Talkin' a-bout the moo-lah, y'all!" Chuck Brown screams.

The crowd, in unison, points right back at the stage.

"That moo-lah, y'all!"

Zuhhn. Zuhhn. Those orders again... Twist. Turn. Move. Y'all. And almost everybody does, except for Dorothy Dandridge, Part II. This *sepla femme fatale* is caught up in her own romance. Her own party. Look at her: She grinds, slow hand, dancing three months behind everybody's 10-second jig. Some look at her. Is she dusty? Stuck up? Lonely? What up with her? She is the calm in the middle of this teeny-bop hurricane. Miss Cocoa Pop. Everyone else is jealous, because the arrogant strobe is impatient with them.



but it stops to smile on her. Caress her. Screen-test her.

The optical hallucinogen of kaleidoscope really agrees with you, baby, says the strobe.

Two young hard rocks—black porkpie hats, black leather jackets, big muscles, insecure, but tight egos—sandwich her, trying to make her accelerate, zombie-style. She doesn't argue, but she doesn't speed up, either. Her chilly, closed-eyed trance frightens them off into the darkness. She remains in her own continuum, as the strobe lights flatter and whimper, groveling at her sneakers.

No comment from Dorothy Dandridge, Part II, because she doesn't need to trip the light fantastic. She doesn't even really need go go. But she had a headache tonight, and she's allergic to aspirin. So she opted for go go, because the rhythm melts in your bones, not on your skin.

City Street. Day.

Along the row of gutted storefronts on Washington, D.C.'s infamous 14th Street, a few homeless men are rubbing and warming their hands over the flickering orange-and-yellow flame of a fire in a garbage can, in the damp and darkened rubble of a dilapidated building; a junkie drifts into a genuflecting nod near a trashed telephone booth, and a pair of loud, gaudy transvestites in tiedie mini-skirts walks past, gesticulating wildly.

Washington is nicknamed "Chocolate City," but a confectioner's dream is not to be found here. Washington is almost 90 percent black. And even though it has a black mayor, black people have little or no voice here. But Washington has the beat, the pulse, the momentum. Go go.

You'll recognize it before the coda of the first eight bars. Pneumatic snare and kick drum, swirling percussion, alarming cowbells. It's African memory, funky homeland recollections, antiquity's telegraph. It's a motivational tool, a mover and shaker of individuals, and an inspirational force, using the feet as a conduit to the conscious and unconscious mind.

If you go to the Panorama Club, the Black Hole, Cherry's, the U Street Temple, or any other club where go go is performed on weekends, you will see bands like Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers (the progenitor of the movement, more than 20 years ago), E.U. (Experience Unlimited), Trouble Funk (the most percussive go go band so far), Rare Essence (the band of choice in all go go circles, because of its uncanny knack for "funking up" funky songs like Sheila E's "Glamorous Life," along with intense renditions of Top 40 ballads), Air Raid, Class, Mass Extension, and Redds and the Boys (possibly the best band of them all). And you will see the crowds (95 percent teenagers) become the music; as much a part of the show as the musicians.

The bands with the beat that go gos on: (top) Redds of Redds and the Boys; E.U.'s Bear, Tino and Daryl, at the Lincoln Memorial; James, Dyke and Tony of Trouble Funk outside the Coliseum; (opposite) Yuggie, high priestess of go go. Previous page: Hollywood, of Redds.

Unlike its distant younger cousin, rap, go go forces you to get in contact with the pulse of your own body. Feel the heartbeat as the music pushes offstage, into manic dances, such as the Happy Feet, Inspector Gadget, and the Whop.

Go go has its negative side, too. Frequent use of angel dust (known on the street as "Love Boat") and violent street gangs called "crews" mar go go's name. But as with any art created in a climate of social unrest or deprivation, the interpretation of the work can cut both ways. Go go could strike you as grotesque and hideous, or extremely beautiful. It depends on how much empathy you have for the people, the motion, the spirit. Or, maybe, how long you can dance to what you hear.

Go go is more than just music, though. It's black life, without any pretense. It's the echo of the Greyhound/Trailways system that brought blacks from all points south to Washington (a kind of geographical way station), before they went to all points north, looking for the "promised land." But some found the promise in Washington. And it's from these people, from the fervor of Sunday Baptist church assemblies, and from the rough-hewn propulsion of Saturday-night blues shows, that go go springs. Music from the "bowels of the city," as Maxx Kidd, chief entrepreneur and supporter of go go music, describes it.

It is acknowledged in Washington that when nobody believed in this music, Maxx Kidd staked his life on it. A former boxer and R&B singer from Charleston, West Virginia, Kidd is the guru of go go. Kidd has a penchant for roadie jackets and four stars on the epaulets, and chain-smokes filterless cigarettes between clenched teeth. This is the guy in command, the swaggering urban general who doesn't like to start trouble, but won't take any garbage from anyone, either.

Kidd is sitting in his offices in a nondescript room at T.T.E.D. (Togetherness, Truth, and Eternal Determination), which has on its roster Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers, E.U., Trouble Funk, Mass Extension, Redds and Boys, and the Yuggies, an all-girl go go band. His daughter, five or six years old, with beautiful almond-shaped eyes and thick ponytails, is scribbling on a small blackboard on the floor. Kidd's base of operations is in a warehouse located on a stretch of factories, fast-food operations and low-rise condos along the periphery of northeastern D.C. Behind the offices is a vast rehearsal space for Redds and the Boys, soon to be converted into a 48-track recording studio. Redds may well become the first superstar band of go go, partly because Chris Blackwell of Island Records is making a film (*Good to Go*) featuring them, and because their charisma is so strong.

Kidd is dressed in a green "Total Experience" jacket, dungarees, and worn tan loafers which he kicks on and off of his heels. He has a coffee-and-cream complexion, and his face is covered by a scraggly beard.

"Go go was one of the first fuels for the rap fire," he says, blowing a stream of white smoke with Brando-Method emphasis. "In the mid-'70s, when the DJs in

the little New York clubs in the Bronx and Harlem—like Pete D.J. Jones, Maboya, Grandmaster Flowers, and Grandmaster Flash—would get hold of a Trouble Funk, or a record by E.U., they would soak the labels—so nobody would know who the artist was—and hold it over their audiences, like ‘You won’t get to hear this record anyplace else, unless you come to my parties!’ New York rap was a variation on the local dialogue at ■ Trouble Funk or E.U. show.”

“You know, the bands would yell, ‘Southeast—Freeze!’ which means the audience—and band—would break the action simultaneously, like suspended animation. Then, ‘Northeast—Freeze!’ ‘Wrecking Crew—Freeze,’ ‘The whole house—Freeze!’ you know? And it got to the point where Trouble would improvise during their shows with vamps like”—Kidd leans back, scratching his head, trying to recall the precise memory, then, in ■ sing-song voice—“‘T-r-o-u-b-l-e Funk boogie! Gonna drop the bomb on the Northeast Crew!’”

“The only difference between rap and go go is that rap lacks ■ spontaneous perpetual rhythm. With go go, you never know what’s gonna happen. It swoops, it dips, it dives, it explodes. The groove from the stage to the audience is almost like an umbilical cord, nourishing the movement and activity on the floor.

“You’ll notice a strange thing when you go to a go go show.” Kidd coughs as he pounds his chest with a fist, smiles, reaches into his jacket, and lights another cigarette. “When the bands finish playing, the audience never applauds. Never. You know why? Because they’re part of the show. They’re so involved with what’s going on onstage, they don’t realize they’re being entertained. Because it’s not really entertainment. It’s a workout of sorts. Emotional aerobics. Go go is soul music revisited, soul music stripped to the marrow, soul music broken down to its basic element: *The drum*. If you don’t have the drum, you don’t have go go.”

Dressing Room.

Maxx Kidd, in brown blazer, tan slacks, tan open-collar shirt, tan loafers with no socks, is puffing on a cigarette between clenched teeth. He looks and smiles at Chuck Brown, also puffing a cigarette. They laugh and slap hands. Brown wipes his sweaty forehead with muscular, veiny hands, and takes another drag. He and the Soul Searchers have just played a non-stop, two-and-a-half-hour set. Up close, Brown is soaked jherri curls, smooth brown skin, bespectacled, with piercing eyes that look right through you, lidded by gothic-arched, inverted-“V” eyebrows. Towing his sweaty black T-shirt, and then his muscular arms, he speaks in ■ tough, southern voice.

“Should I speak on how I got started?” he says, looking at Kidd. “I’m tired of telling that story.”

“Tell the truth,” says Kidd. “Tell the truth.”

Brown nods his head.

“Well, before I formed the Soul Searchers, I was with a dynamite group that really hasn’t got enough credit over the past 20 years, a group called the Los Latinos, fronted by a dynamite brother named Tommy Smith. One of the most



Derek Rogers

inspirational groups I’ve ever played in. That was 1965. Before that, I was with Lloyd Price for a minute. I played for Jerry Butler a couple of times.

“I formed the Soul Searchers in 1968—only two pieces—me and another guitar player. Originally, I’m from North Carolina, but I’ve been in D.C. since I was four. I had an eight-piece band in 1972, and we cut our first record. Go go really started to take hold in 1975, at the time when disco was dominant. The business for bands was slow then, but in 1976, people started catching on to ■ go go. When people hear the word ‘go go,’ they think of Smokey Robinson and a dance club. But go go is more an event than it is a place.”

Brown takes a long, deep drag from his cigarette.

“But, anyway, like I was saying, in 1976 people started catching on to the talk thing, the rap thing began ■ happen. And that was good for us, because I’ve always rapped in between my tunes, even when we were playing Top 40. I used to rap on the percussion breakdown. That became a good structure for us, in terms of consistency. The music goes on. I developed that because I got tired of the band stopping and waiting, trying to decide which tune I was going to do next. And the people began to like the percussion breakdown so much that we started to perform more of our original tunes. We became more creative.

“In 1978, we dropped ‘Bustin’ Loose’ out there. And that’s how it got started. All of the other bands around town picked it up, the percussion-breakdown sound. And it’s a great honor to us to know you have something worthy enough that others want to pattern after.”

Brown is smiling.

“Nothing could be more complimen-

tary than that,” says Brown. He looks at Kidd, who nods his head.

Brown pauses; he seems to be mustering himself to say something.

“I learned how to play guitar in the joint,” he finally says. “An old man by the name of Scotty—God rest his soul; he’s dead now—an old brother. . . . He made a guitar for me for five cartons of cigarettes. He was a great guitar player. Cigarettes is money in the joint. That was 22 years ago, when I thought a pistol in my hand could get me over, y’undstand? But I had time to reconstruct myself in the joint. I’ve been in four different penitentiaries. At 49 years old”—others in the tiny dressing room stare in disbelief, because he looks like he’s only in his late 30s—“I am a totally rehabilitated man. I give thanks to the Lord for that. I love people. I’ve made mistakes.”

Brown ■ looking dead at me.

“But I love people. And I want to pass that love on through the music.”

The Black Hole. Late the next night. Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers perform tuneful prestidigitation on the crowd. Instead of the knockdown drive of “We Need Money,” the melancholy dirge of “Moody’s Blues” fills the Black Hole. Something strange is happening. The melody has slowed down, but the groove is still mashing. A bit faster, even, than “We Need Money.”

But the pretty young wallflowers want to sit down. They’re exhausted; they’ve proven they can hang out. Besides, it’s late, the majority of them are virgins, and they need to go home so they can dream about frantic body language. But the cowbells, the congas, the big beat of the drum won’t let go. The old pros nonchalantly instruct the wallflowers in the art of fully-clothed sex. Young zombies,

minds adrift, arms akimbo, write interlocking pelvic sentences filled with exclamation points. A mass of young bodies—except for one—twist together, holding on for dear life and sanity, harmonizing along with Chuck Brown, by way of Eddie Jefferson.

“Ooooh, when we are one/I’m not afraid, I’m not afraid. . . .”

Time shifts, and the ballooned Black Hole deflates; it’s time to start packing up, as Chuck Brown and the crowd shout the last two words of the song, because this was the last dance for the night. One big bluesy, symbiotic voice, joined from the stage and the dance floor, almost raises the roof: “WE’RE THRUUUUU!”

“Good night, y’all,” Brown waves as he unstraps his guitar.

Dance Floor. Early Morning.

The crowd is filing out of the two narrow exit doors in the back of the club, like liquid through a small funnel. The bright house lights pierce through the marshy darkness, creating a dim bronze aura.

On the street teeming with dungaree-suited, leather-jacketed zombies, a dozen police cars herd the wandering, stifled crowd off to their cars, or city buses, away from the scene.

Back inside the club, band members packing their instruments are mesmerized by a tall *café au lait* beauty, eyes closed, grinding by herself, without music. They leave the stage and the house lights begin to click off one by one. A pudgy, middle-aged man walks over and gently escorts Dorothy Dandridge, Part II, away from the foot of the stage. She doesn’t argue; but she doesn’t speed up, either.

Another night. The beat will go go on another night. ■



The Smiths.

They aren't teen idols, but have a number-one album thanks mainly to Morrissey, their asexual, charismatic singer-writer.

Article by Jon Savage

Music as it stands now has very little to do with human truth and I think that's very sad. Young people don't care about new novels or the theatre anymore. The only thing that they have is popular music, and it's not utilized in a positive way. I think that when people make attempts to do that, they're hounded from the business."

The man airing these thoughts sits quietly in an armchair, sipping tea. Steven Morrissey, now known only by his surname, is the writer, singer and leader of The Smiths. Currently one of the most successful bands in Great Britain, they are testing America this year with the release of their album *Meat Is Murder*. The title reflects Morrissey's 10 years of vegetarianism. "This beautiful creature must die, a death for no reason, and death for no reason is murder," he sings on the title track. "Do you know how animals die? Kitchen aromas aren't very homely, it's not comforting, cheery, or kind, it's sizzling blood and unholy stench, of murder." Music for hamburger lovers?

The initial flush of Morrissey's rancor can be heard on their first two albums, which see Morrissey tortured, sinister and always unnerving. The mood is perhaps best expressed by *Hatful of Hollow*'s "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now." He is less pained on *Meat Is Murder*, which has the surprising quality, thanks to some hypnotic melodies, of almost being background music. It is not until you have heard the songs four or five times that you realize all is not as it seems. For instance, in "What She Said": "I smoke 'cause I'm hoping for an early death."

Morrissey (left). Playing in the leaves (above right) the Smiths are, from left to right, Mike Joyce, Johnny Marr, Morrissey and Andy Rourke.

Like Leonard Cohen before them, The Smiths have cornered the market on a certain brand of adolescent insecurity. Morrissey's emotional writing and quavering voice might have merely mimicked the gray dirges of early Joy Division had it not been for his longtime friend and younger ally, guitarist Johnny Marr, who provides the outfit with their optimistic, springy, sometimes danceable melodies. Marr's outgoing temperament complements Morrissey's introverted nature, and it is this tension which gives The Smiths their power. Their current single, "How Soon Is Now," is an admission of vulnerability set against the classic Bo Diddley/Rolling Stones "Mona" beat of sexual self-assertion. It is the latest in a long line of songs which attempt to redefine a masculine sensibility. While others are enticed by the sexual histrionics of Prince or Boy George, Morrissey is quietly promoting a vision of men who can reveal their emotions without being weak, who can be masculine without being macho. "I am a human and I need to be loved/just like everybody else does," he sings.

Morrissey has strong feelings about human emotions and sexual attitudes, and recoiled in horror when *Rolling Stone* writer James Henke reported that Morrissey "admits that he's gay." "I find most people in the music business are still morbidly macho," he says. "I think attitudes toward sex are still very rigid, and we need look no further than the music industry to see how things really are. Lots of singers wear makeup and do things which are supposedly risqué or unique. But in actual fact, these people are not unique. They are cartoon characters. They don't threaten sexual stereotypes; that can only really come from intellect."

The Smiths have a quiet, fanatic self-confidence, which is expressed in the fact that they do not feel a need to follow the tenets set by their fellow musicians. While the British pop scene



Derek Rodgers

is currently characterized by the haircut, the synthesizer and the expensive video, the Smiths have shunned all three. They don't play synthesizers, they wear plain clothes, and they won't make videos. The video shown in the United States for "How Soon Is Now" was made and released by Sire Records—without the band's permission, according to their manager, Scott Piering. Meanwhile, Sire claim: "We did not do it without their permission, but they did not exactly applaud us. We felt we needed a video to make promotion more effective."

Manchester remains an inextricable part of The Smiths. Morrissey, John Marr (guitar), Andy Rourke (bass) and Mike Joyce (drums) were born and raised in the depressed industrial city about 200 miles outside London. It was gloomy and depressing, unemployment figures were astronomical, and the "dole" (welfare) kept most families alive. Young people's despondency and frustration unleashed itself in the small but lively music scene. Standard garments were long, heavy overcoats, and baggy trousers reminiscent of Anthony Perkins' in *Psycho*. The Smiths still live there.

Morrissey received the normal public education, alluded to with great bitterness in the Smiths' song "The Headmasters Ritual." He left school at the age of 16 and became a recluse. For several years he sat in his bedroom, surrounded by pictures of James Dean. Nurturing an ambition to be a writer, he scribbled frantically, read, ran an unofficial New York Dolls fan club, and, one suspects, decided what he was going to say when he became famous.

"I've never felt any need to write about any other place," says Morrissey. "It has to be Manchester, because I grew up there and everything that I feel now is because of certain incidents that happened there. Nowadays, the place is remarkably depressing and full of space. People no longer live; they simply don't do anything anymore."

His voice reflects the clipped, quiet tones of his native city, an accent that is more dour, more self-deprecating than that of neighboring Liverpool. His slightly shy, retiring demeanor belies a quiet, yet devastating, self-confidence spawned perhaps from an intellectual arrogance. Morrissey is very well-read.

He is 26 years old, but can appear younger or older as the mood takes him. Today, he is wearing a gray cardigan and horn-rimmed spectacles that make him look like a bookish student. He behaves with a courtesy that is old-fashioned in its formality. Last year, the *Gospel According to Morrissey* wavered between self-hatred ("I don't see what I have to live for," he told one magazine) and controversial political attitudes ("The sorrow of the IRA Brighton bombing is that Thatcher escaped unscathed"). Currently, his pronouncements tend toward the serious and even the paranoid; he has to be cajoled into revealing his sense of humor. One should not forget that this is a man with perfectly good ears who wears a hearing aid on stage.

How the Smiths will be received in America is still an interesting question. They do not attract a teen constituency, yet their album went straight to number one on the UK charts. Unlike their contemporaries riding the so-called British Invasion, they are moralists and social commentators. Although groups with messages have not been embraced by the public in recent years, The Smiths are not concerned. And, anyway, Morrissey hates flying.

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In a strange, Hollywood way, are John McEnroe and Tatum O'Neal our Prince Charles and Lady Di ?



Turack/Romey

AMERICA'S COUPLE

Article by Victor Bockris

Near the end of 1984, the American news media began releasing a series of photographs of the American actress Tatum O'Neal and world champion tennis player John McEnroe. There was something arresting about these photographs that went beyond the combination of two celebrity names. They took on a life of their own, as the story of the perfect couple for the '80s unfolded.

In the first, released in December of '84, O'Neal was seen on the arm of McEnroe as they left his Central Park West condominium for a tournament. O'Neal's fur coat, her firm tread and the angle of her head—which was gleefully molded to the shoulder of McEnroe's casual, buttoned-as-if-in-haste herringbone overcoat—suggested that she might soon become a permanent fixture. When the red-blooded reader learned in the accompanying caption that O'Neal had only recently moved into McEnroe's apartment with 22 suitcases, instructing the elevator man to "Call me Tatum," he could not fail to sigh with relief for the embattled nerves of the tennis star, knowing he would now receive a good night's sleep in return for his largess on court and off.

But there was something else tugging at my memory, something that would not go away—the face of a nine-year-old girl, on the arm of a similar-looking young man, lit by a paper moon.

It seemed like a match made in heaven. He was 26, she was 22. She had been America's reigning nymphet in the heady mid-'70s, when the country savaged its sexuality at an international barbecue where men and women disappeared and children were eaten, preferably alive. And then she turned to sports, horsing her way through *International Velvet*, pitching her way into Walter Matthau's grumpy heart in *The Bad News Bears*. She would, if anyone could, understand McEnroe, his needs, his pains, his pleasures. And wasn't that what she was for now, this washed-up little girl, unhinged on the talk-show circuit, speaking to America at 8:00AM in a flippy voice that came from another time zone, looking for her father in corridors of Farrah, and slam dunked by the inevitable first screen kiss?

But then a strange and ominous photograph appeared on the front page of the *New York Post* on the morning of January 14, 1985, and one sat up, alerted to a problem in the relationship, and perhaps, by definition, a problem in America, because we need our celebrity lovers to stave off the nation's nightmares by

supporting the dream of royal romance. The photograph was supposedly McEnroe's victory shot. He has just defeated Ivan Lendl in the Volvo Masters tournament at Madison Square Garden and won \$100,000—and yet what's this? He sits slumped in his chair, a towel across his crotch, a look, not of exhaustion, but of existential gloom covering his face like a mask. It is the kind of look the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley must have cast upon the stormy waves when Mary Shelley closeted herself for a couple of days to write *Frankenstein*, an unreturnable serve. What has happened to McEnroe in this photograph?

Behind his court-side seat stands the answer. Tatum O'Neal, wearing a silk polka dot off-the-shoulder blouse, her hair flowing in a sculpted swathe like a helmet around her face, her lips slightly parted in a pout-kiss, her arms pertly folded across her chest, casts a dubious, heavy-lidded glance down across McEnroe's shoulder to the towel that covers his manhood. Oh photograph, tell your lies! Can it be Tatum's having a Big Mac attack? Who is taking these photos? Who is editing them?

But before we can find the answer to these pressing questions, all hell breaks loose. Farrah Fawcett is expecting her "love child" by Ryan (Tatum's Dad and secret love, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Mac). The mad O'Neal pere, who has recently socked his son Griff in the mouth, blasts Big John, labeling him a "hooligan." While Mac's parents, in an interview for the British tabloid *News of the World*, attack Tatum, and wish that John would take back his ex, Stella.

Meanwhile, Mac has dropped his Volvo wad on, of all things, a ring. A ring! Rings for her fingers and rings for her toes, and yes, Mac's bank balance is diminishing fast, and his father tugs at his scraggly hat, wringing his hands like Vernon Presley trying to stop his son from buying 25 more pickup trucks. And the lovers disappear in a shower of yesterday's rumors.

The next photographs are from Malibu! John has purchased a love nest on the famous beach where old actors never fade away, they simply drown in the surf. There is a flower shop down the street where he becomes a daily customer, lugging back enormous bouquets for his babe in the hope of appeasing her childish demands. It seems flowers are not enough.

Outside the idyllic condo sits a big black van, the kind the Feds use when they want to sneak up on you, and in the van, hunched down on all fours with all sorts

of sophisticated monitoring devices, are a photographer and a sweating journalist preparing to concoct a scoop. Out come the Royal Brats, ready for a drive to who knows where—perhaps Ryan's place, to chuck the love child under the chin and grin in expectation of their own immortality. John hops into the driver's seat and revs the black Porsche's engine as Tatum, delicate in a pair of flat toe shoes, white stockings and a designer dress with scarf, marches around to enter the passenger door. Annoyed to find some sand on the floor, she grabs the rubber mat and shakes it out in the driveway. John, edgy, tense, his victories sitting heavy in him, revs the engine, revs the engine, revs the engine. According to the photographs, they've already had a fight, and Tatum is annoyed. Then, tensing like a deer, she senses the soft clicking of a thousand prying cameras—tsk-tsk-tsk—just like in a movie! She spins and sprints back to the car, attractive in her panic. Inside the van, the photographer can hardly keep his fingers working. Mac releases the clutch and spins out the driveway until he's blocking the exit path of the van. Now they're Bonnie and Clyde! He hops out of the car in a fury, stares at the menacing machine and screams out, "What are you trying to do—ruin my life?"

The newshounds explain laconically that they're just doing their job, so if you and the little lady straighten out, freshen up and give us an exclusive—hey, we'll leave you alone! John, ashen, his East Coast mind bogged by the disorientation of it all—Malibu, Hollywood, the sun—turns to his bunkmate and suggests they comply. Incensed, the nubile Princess lets loose an obscenity, jumps behind the wheel and drives straight back into her paper moon, leaving McEnroe fatigued, empty, forgotten outside his own house. That's what you saw if you followed these photographs for the last few months. That's what they said.

Well, now I have something to say. Tatum, Princess of the Silver Screen in the Land of the Golden Sun, it is you who have catapulted John McEnroe out of the sports section and onto the front pages. It's your responsibility to take control of this movie. The newsmen on their leashes, with their deadly lenses, are shooting your movie for you. Either direct the film and release your own prints, or give it up and get out of the light. Right now, it's deuce and you're on the court. Two good shots and you'll win the match. We know you can do it, Little Darling, and we wish you would.

SPIN

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We promised the magazine would be fun, open, informative, graphically bold and, most of all, completely in touch with what is new and exciting. It was a safe promise and we make it again, because we look for stories in places other magazines don't seem to

think of and hear what others aren't listening to.

When SPIN talks to the biggest stars, it speaks intelligently, so we get intelligent answers. When we talk to new talent, we do so respectfully and knowledgeably and always learn something fascinating. We take music seriously, but never ourselves. We have a sense of humor and, what's worse, we use it.

SPIN is hopelessly in love with rock 'n' roll. You are too, probably. So why don't you subscribe and let's get on with the relationship?

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SPINPATROL

In case you somehow missed these major news stories, we didn't . . .

REDS SAY 'NYET' TO BOY!



MIFFED Boy George vows that he'll go to Russia even though officials there don't want him.

Lipsticked rocker Boy George is an enemy of the people!

That's the word from Commie kingpins in Moscow who refuse to give the outrageous dress-wearing songman permission to go on a sight-seeing trek through straitlaced Russia.

When Boy learned of the refusal, he was miffed to the max.

"It's obvious the Russians are worried we would show their people what they are missing," fumed the rouge-cheeked crooner.

**Man sacrifices leg
to save beloved dog**



IT'S UNANIMOUS — Big shots in the Soviet Union's ruling politburo vote 'nyet' when asked if Boy George should be allowed in Russia.

Top scientists stunned as . . .

ANCIENT SKULL TALKS & SINGS!

Real 007 would have HERPES!

The world's most famous spy — James Bond — has been attacked by the Salvation Army for making immoral sex scenes glamorous and leading the world's youth astray.

In the Army's English newspaper called "War Cry," Bond and those who make the 007 was called "One of the world's worst enemies."

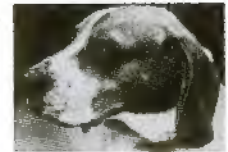
"The entire area of sex, family life, responsibility and faithfulness count for nothing in Bond films," said an editorial.

"Even worse, the 'good' hero makes immorality seem both glamorous and acceptable."

While "War Cry" didn't single out Roger Moore and Sean Connery — the actors who made Bond world famous — it did lash out on the bad influence their alter ego — James Bond — had on the young.

And the paper pointed out that a real person would be in real medical trouble if he tried all the bad hopping 007 does.

"Any real-life James Bond would be riddled with sex diseases (including herpes, which is incurable)." — London Daily Star.



GHOST DOG

Spirit of beloved pet returns to save family from blaze

**Mousey wife kills
big-mouth hubby —
by shoving him out
of a Ferris wheel!**

EXPLODING TOILET BOWLS WOMAN OVER

'Imagine this happening in a bathroom stall which is considered to be the safest place in the whole world'

Hitler's sweetie was a dingbat!



DEVOTED companion to the man who destroyed half a continent, Eva Braun posed for this photo in late 1941.



Ed Colver

THANK HEAVEN FOR 7-11

7-11 is more than a store, more than an institution, more than a way of life. It's—it's totally cosmic, dude.

by Henry Rollins

Hey, you. Yeah, you—come here a second, I wanna talk to you. Look, I don't know you, you don't know me, we don't go to the same parties, never tubbed together. I know you think I'm some kind of weirdo, but listen . . . I bet, just bet, you and I have one thing in common, one thing that unites us, one thing that will allow us to look each other in the eyes and feel right. Yes, friend . . . 7-11. They're in your town, they're in my town, we have both seen the orange, white and green beacon against the night sky. What's your thing? Coffee, video games, microwave food? You want somethin'? They got somethin' you want, and that is good.

I ventured into my first 7-11 during the summer of 1968. That was back in the days when said establishment opened at 7:00AM and closed at 11:00PM. I was still a believer by the summer of '80, and went nightly to have my dinner. For as long as I live, I will never forget those nights of fine dining. Hanging out at the 7-11 on Wisconsin and Q Street in Washington, D.C. . . . Oh man, some nights it was a Truck Stopper and a Big Gulp, other nights a large red-hot burrito and a Big Gulp. One night I ate two large red-hot burritos! Lord, Lord, pin a medal on me! Yes, I survived.

I joined Black Flag during the summer of 1981 and started touring 7-11s all through the United States and Canada. Things that spring to mind: Austin, Texas, near the Austin university hospital. If you get in the right

spot, you can see three 7-11s at once; I can proudly say that I have been to all three. Edmonton, Canada: two 7-11s open, right across the street from each other. Needless to say, I checked out both of them.

Yes, I could go on and on, and I will. Here's a little story for you. *Rollins Journal*, extract, 1/30/85, Hermosa Beach, California: "I wonder if the lady who works the graveyard shift at the 7-11 on Artesia and Prospect is a cop. The guys who work the day shift are, for sure. They probably get in real good with the students at Mira Costa High and then try and bust them for pot or something. You go in there and tell me what you think. Maybe 7-11s are headquarters for police surveillance! All across the U.S., we are being watched as we play video games, cook in the microwave, and buy video-rock magazines. Under that dopey, orange-and-beige regulation smock is a badge and a chest to pin it on, fella, and don't say I didn't warn you. Rollins out."

Sound familiar? Close enough, I'll bet. Here's another 7-11 story from southern California, but it might as well be from Madison, Wisconsin . . . 2/13/85, Hermosa Beach, California: "Saw a kid rip off a *Creem* magazine from the 7-11 on Artesia and Phelton. Slick mover, that kid. He bent down, lifted his pant leg and bailed out of the store. Kids hanging out wearing Iron Maiden T-shirts and playing video games; someday, they will stand behind the counter. Now it's just a dream. Isn't it everybody's dream? To don that orange and beige smock, to stand with your feet planted solidly, facing front proudly, turning only to fill an order for a Big Gulp or Slurpee? (Oh, 7-11, man, it's 4:00AM—who can we turn to now but you?) Have you ever looked into the cold-drink section and seen that familiar smock around in there? Bet you'd like to know what goes on back there. Always hoping that Channel 7 would do a behind-the-scenes report? Hey, me too! Seven-11 is the pulse-beat of America. I think that Bruce Springsteen should do a song about a 7-11 in Asbury Park, New Jersey, but write it in such a way that America's youth can identify and slurp along with the Boss. Hail the Boss! Hail 7-11!"

I gotta ask ya—what happens to people? They turn new wave, they move away, they mate, they take drugs, they watch TV, they get in car crashes, they get lucky, they get stabbed, they get rich, they go crazy, they go to Philadelphia and never return, etcetera. OK, the girls and boys in Beverly Hills are no different from the ones in Harlem. They may smile a little more, but they have

the same needs. Fine, there are no sushi bars in the ghetto and no pawnshops in the land of "charge it" youth, but there is 7-11. You notice that I didn't say, "there are 7-11s." I meant that. Seven-11 is more than a store, more than an institution, more than a way of life. It's—it's totally cosmic, dude. Like, bigger than "Thriller."

At this point, you're probably asking yourself, "What's this slob getting at and what does he want from me?" What I'm getting at is this: In this age of trials and tribulation, of terror and turmoil of the soul, we need some common bond, a thing we can share, a place we can go to still the agitated waters of our hearts. Friends, it's bigger than both of us. No, not Prince, not U.S. Steel: 7-11. How many people can you depend on seven days a week, 24 hours a day? Cyndi Lauper? Nastassia Kinski? Do they have a 16-ounce coffee with your name on it? They wouldn't even give me the time of day, much less a crack at their Pac-Man machine. Friends, the answer is a simple one—it's 7-11. The panacea, the common chord that resonates deep within all of us, is 7-11. That's why 7-11s are springing up all over, rising to the cries of a nation that needs to feel good about itself again. Brothers and sisters, salvation is at hand. Seek and ye shall find.

Henry (far left) at night job; (above and below) where he can be found any other time.



Ed Colver



Ed Colver

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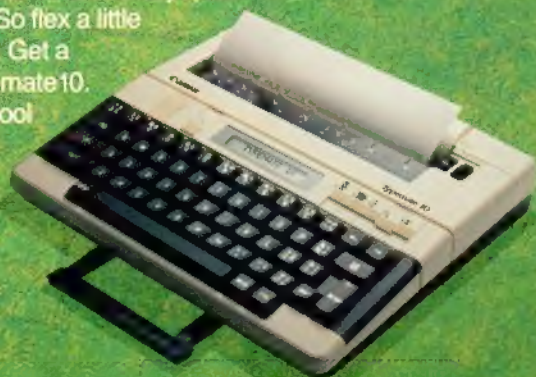
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